



New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2024 Round Guidelines

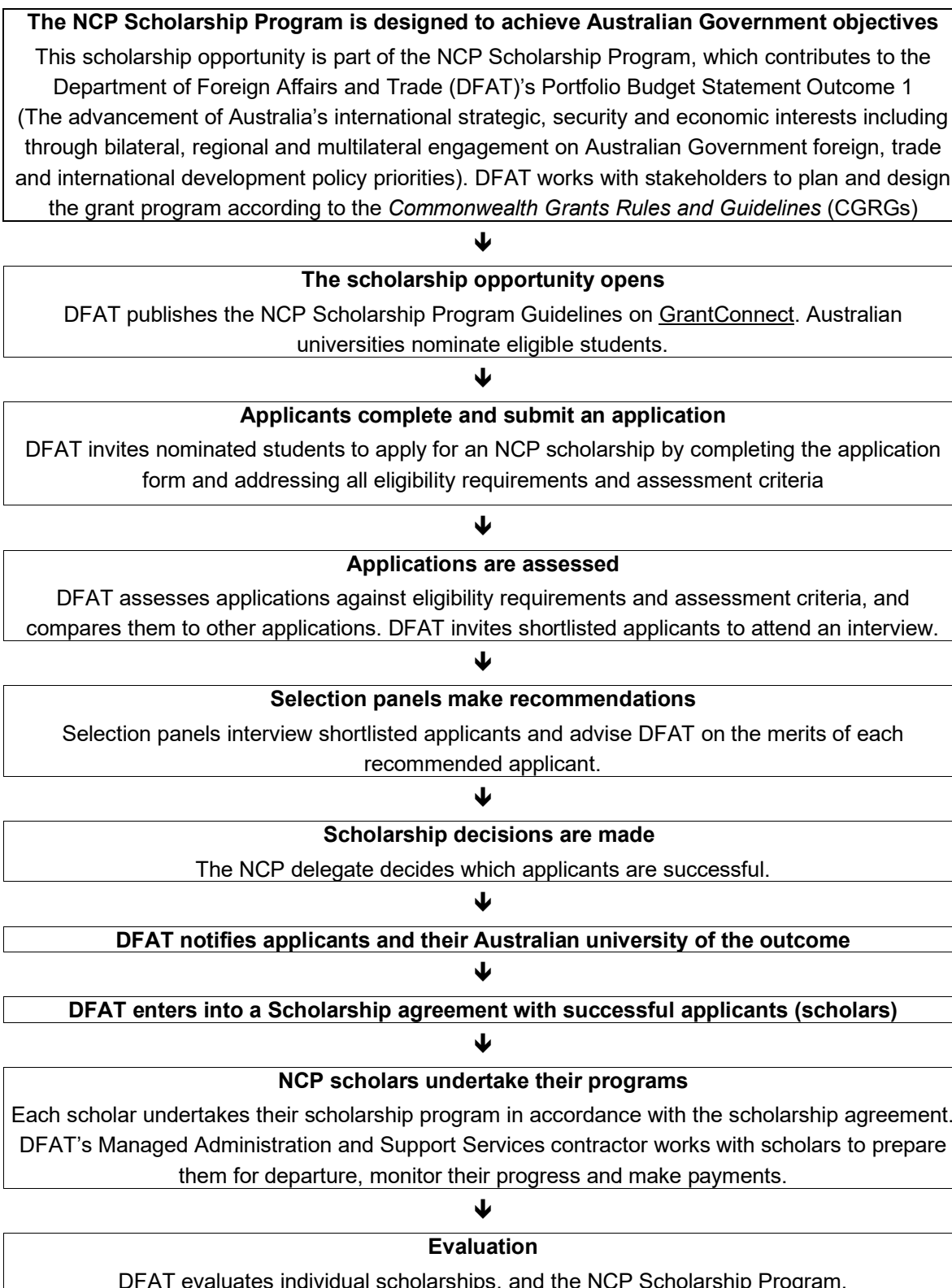
University nominations open:	29 June 2023
University nominations close:	11.30 pm AEST on 25 July 2023
Student applications open:	26 July 2023
Student applications close:	11.30 pm AEST on 22 August 2023
Commonwealth policy and administering entity:	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Enquiries:	Please submit any questions to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au no later than 15 August 2023.
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1. New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program: 2024 Round process



1.1. Introduction

These guidelines provide information about the 2024 round of the NCP Scholarship Program, including eligibility requirements and processes for selecting scholarship recipients.

Before applying, applicants must read these guidelines and the Advice to Applicants on the DFAT [website](#). These guidelines take priority to the extent of any inconsistency with the Advice to Applicants.

These guidelines set out:

- the NCP strategic objective and outcomes
- eligibility requirements and assessment criteria
- how scholars are selected
- how applicants are notified
- how scholars are supported, including payments and advice
- how evaluation of the NCP Scholarship Program may be conducted, and
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

DFAT administers the NCP according to the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs).¹

2. About the grant program

2.1. Strategic objective and outcomes of the NCP

The NCP, launched in 2014, aims to lift knowledge in Australia of the Indo-Pacific by supporting Australian university students to study and undertake internships in the region.

The NCP has two programs: scholarships (up to 19 months) and mobility grants (between two weeks and two semesters). Both programs include study, internships, mentorships and language training. The NCP also includes the NCP Alumni Program, which is open to all NCP scholars and mobility students on completion of their award, and supports alumni to maintain a connection to each other, the NCP and the Indo-Pacific as they progress in their lives and careers.

The strategic objective of the NCP is to strengthen Australia's regional standing by building a diverse cohort of Australian alumni with deeper Indo-Pacific knowledge, capability and connections.

The intended outcomes of the NCP are:

- increased number and diversity of Australian university graduates with Indo-Pacific capability
- deeper people-to-people and institutional relationships between Australia and the Indo-Pacific, and
- students and alumni connected with leaders in government, business and civil society in the Indo-Pacific.

¹ <https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-11/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-guidelines.pdf>

2.2. About the NCP Scholarship Program

The NCP Scholarship Program provides scholarships to a diverse cohort of Australian university students to undertake offshore programs including study, internships, mentorships and language training for up to 19 months in eligible Indo-Pacific host locations.

The NCP Scholarship Program has an active alumni community, supporting past scholars to share their experiences, promote the NCP and continue to maintain and develop links with the Indo-Pacific.

2.3. Roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government

The NCP Secretariat within DFAT is responsible for strategic leadership, policy, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, business liaison and public diplomacy for the NCP.

DFAT has contracted a Managed Administration and Support Services contractor (the contractor) to deliver administration and support services during the NCP scholarship life-cycle, including the application period, while scholars are on award and when they join the NCP Alumni Program.

DFAT is not responsible for arranging study, internships, mentorships, language training or travel arrangements (including visas and accommodation). Scholars are responsible, in consultation with their home universities, host institutions, host organisations, language training providers, and their case managers (from the contractor), for planning and carrying out their approved scholarship program.

2.4. Roles and responsibilities of Australian universities

Each nominating Australian university:

- a) nominates an NCP Liaison Officer (ILO) for Scholarships (and an alternative contact, where possible) who will submit nominations on behalf of the Australian university and receive updates during the selection process. The ILO must provide consent for their name and contact details to be published on the NCP Website and for them to be contacted by DFAT
- b) may nominate up to 15 students to apply for the 2024 round of the NCP Scholarship Program
- c) must obtain the consent of each nominee to provide their personal details to DFAT
- d) must ensure email addresses provided for nominees are accurate
- e) must support each applicant to arrange a study component and confirm that each applicant's proposed study components meet the requirements in Section 5.2.1
- f) should assist applicants to obtain evidence of acceptance by their host institution and should support them to arrange internships, mentorships and language training
- g) must work with their applicants to undertake risk assessments of host locations proposed by applicants (see Section 5.5.4) and work with scholars to undertake risk assessments of any new host locations proposed by scholars during their program
- h) must approve internship placements proposed by applicants.

Australian public universities have obligations under the Foreign Arrangements Scheme when entering into arrangements with foreign entities, including certain foreign universities. Universities must comply with these obligations in relation to NCP scholarship programs. Information about the Foreign Arrangements Scheme is available at <https://www.foreignarrangements.gov.au/>

The contractor may contact and request the assistance of ILOs when necessary.

2.5. Roles and responsibilities of applicants

Each applicant:

- a) must ensure their application is complete, including supporting documentation and referee reports, and is submitted by the closing time
- b) is responsible for any costs associated with preparing and lodging their application
- c) is responsible for the decision to apply for and, if successful, accept a scholarship. The Australian Government will not be liable for any loss, damage, injury or harm that might be suffered during, or in connection with, the NCP Scholarship Program
- d) must make their own enquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel, including travel to host location(s), and be fully informed about the risks at all times, and complete a risk assessment and have it approved by the home university prior to departure from Australia
- e) must read carefully the travel advice for their host location(s) and other relevant pages on the Smartraveller website for information about risks overseas and preparing for overseas travel
- f) must not travel to a host location or region within a host location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller advice is 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel', as outlined in section 5.5
- g) must exhibit professional behaviour throughout the selection process.

2.6. Roles and responsibilities of scholars

Each scholar must:

- a) subscribe to relevant travel advisories on Smartraveller prior to commencing their scholarship
- b) obtain and comply with appropriate visa/s for the duration of their scholarship
- c) not travel to a host location or region within a host location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller advice is 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel', as outlined in section 5.5
- d) register on any crisis page on the Smartraveller website related to their host location that is activated during a major overseas incident during their Program
- e) comply with their scholarship agreement and its incorporated documents such as the NCP Student Code of Conduct, during their scholarship program. Evidence of unprofessional behaviour, including but not limited to, misrepresentation of the truth in an application or at interview, or inappropriate social media posts or public commentary referencing the NCP Scholarship Program can be grounds for not awarding or for cancelling a scholarship (See NCP scholarship agreement, NCP Media and Publication Guidelines, and NCP Student Code of Conduct)
- f) cooperate with, and comply with directions given by, DFAT and the contractor
- g) not participate in another offshore scholarship or mobility project while undertaking their scholarship program.

2.7. Roles and responsibilities of the Managed Administration and Support Services Contractor

The contractor is the first point of contact for applicants and Australian universities on administrative matters, including eligibility for the NCP Scholarship Program, nominations, applications and candidate interviews.

The contractor assigns a case manager, and provides advice, assistance and program management, for each scholar. These services include, but are not limited to:

- a) administration of nomination, application and selection processes
- b) pre-departure support
- c) a briefing pack of relevant information
- d) scholarship allowances
- e) advice and guidance during the scholarship
- f) assistance with scholarship variation requests, and
- g) assistance with a scholar's return to Australia on completion of the scholarship.

The contractor will review each scholar's risk assessment before the scholar departs Australia to confirm whether it is fit for purpose. The contractor will manage critical incidents involving NCP scholars in conjunction with home and host universities, DFAT and emergency services. The contractor will work with home university ILOs, as necessary.

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1. Scholarship grant funding available

A total of \$40 million is available in NCP grant program funding for the 2023-24 financial year. This funding covers the NCP Scholarship Program and the Mobility Program.

The maximum total grant amount for an NCP scholarship is \$87,000.

See Section 5.4 for scholarship benefits.

3.2. Scholarship grant period

The term of an applicant's proposed scholarship program must:

- a) have a duration between three and 19 months, and
- b) commence on or between 1 January 2024 and 15 December 2024, unless otherwise approved by DFAT.

4. Eligibility criteria

DFAT will only consider applications that satisfy all eligibility requirements.

4.1. Who is eligible to apply for a scholarship?

To be eligible for a scholarship, and to remain eligible during their scholarship program, an applicant must:

- a) be nominated for the NCP Scholarship Program by their home university (see Section 4.2)
- b) be an Australian citizen

- c) not be a current citizen or permanent resident of their proposed host location(s)
- d) be enrolled in and undertaking, until completion of all study components of the NCP Scholarship Program, at least one Bachelor Degree, Bachelor Honours Degree or eligible undergraduate language-focused course* at an Australian campus of an Australian university. (If a scholar concludes their home degree requirements upon the completion of the mandatory study component of their NCP Scholarship Program, they may apply to DFAT for approval to continue to undertake any remaining component(s) of their NCP Scholarship Program. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.)
- e) be between 18 and 30 years of age (inclusive) for non-Indigenous applicants, or between 18 and 35 years of age (inclusive) for Indigenous applicants on 1 January 2024
- f) have achieved a minimum 70 per cent graded average or equivalent for their current course at the time of application, as determined by the nominating home university.
- g) not be a previous recipient of an NCP scholarship, and
- h) not be an employee of the branch of DFAT or the contractor that administers the NCP

Scholars must continue to meet these eligibility requirements during the term of their scholarship.

*note: in the 2024 round, undergraduate courses with a specific focus on learning an official language of the scholar's host location will be considered eligible for an NCP scholarship (where all other eligibility criteria are met). The definition of 'undergraduate courses' for this purpose is as defined by the [Higher Education Administrative Information for Providers](#) (see Glossary).

4.2. Nominations

Only students nominated by their home university can apply for a scholarship. Students interested in applying for a scholarship should contact the NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships or the international office of their home university.

Each Australian university may nominate up to 15 students enrolled at that university, without ranking them. Each Australian university determines its own process for selecting nominees but should consider the eligibility requirements and assessment criteria.

DFAT strongly encourages Australian universities to ensure their nominees are representative of the diversity of the Australian university student population. DFAT will consider reasonable accommodation to facilitate participation of students living with disability.

Australian universities must submit nominations online through the NCP Online website. DFAT will provide the Australian university NCP Liaison Officers for NCP Scholarships with instructions to access the website and submit nominations.

Eligible nominated students will be invited to submit an application. Applicants should be aware that the following details will be requested from their home university in the online nomination:

- name
- gender
- date of birth
- email address
- mobile phone
- degree in which the nominee is enrolled
- academic transcript (official)

- intended primary host location, and
- confirmation that the nominated student consents to a police check being arranged by the contractor.

Each participating Australian university must ensure it has appropriate policies in place to handle personal information and has obtained each nominee's consent to deal with and provide their personal information to DFAT.

Each applicant must agree to the terms of use of such personal information (Section 13.4) when submitting their application.

The contractor will arrange a police check for each applicant. The Australian Government expects NCP scholars to enhance the reputation of Australia and the NCP while overseas. An adverse finding may not automatically disqualify an applicant from receiving a scholarship. However, if a successful applicant is found to have a criminal record or conviction, including one that was not disclosed prior to the offer being made, DFAT may revoke or decline to offer a scholarship to the applicant.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1. Eligible scholarship program activities

To be eligible, an applicant's proposed scholarship program must (unless otherwise approved by DFAT):

- a) include at least one study component commencing within three months of the scholarship program commencement date. All study components must be confirmed by the host institution prior to program commencement
- b) be for a scholarship term:
 - of between three and 19 months in duration, and
 - commence on or between 1 January 2024 and 15 December 2024, and
- c) at all times during the scholarship term, involve the scholar undertaking either:
 - a full-time study component
 - a full-time internship component
 - a full-time language training component, or
 - a permitted gap.

In addition, scholarship programs may include:

- a) a part-time internship component (see Section 5.2.2) undertaken concurrently with a full-time study component or full-time language training component
- b) a part-time mentorship (see Section 5.2.3) undertaken concurrently with a full-time study component, full-time internship component or full-time language training, or
- c) a part-time language training component (see Section 5.2.4) undertaken concurrently with a full-time study component or full-time internship component.

The award of an NCP scholarship does not represent automatic approval of proposed program components in the application. All program components will be subject to due diligence and risk assessment to ensure alignment with relevant DFAT policies prior to the scholar's departure from Australia.

5.2. Eligible scholarship program components

5.2.1. Study component

To satisfy the mandatory study component of a scholarship program, a course of study must:

- a) be at least one full-time study period, which is either a semester or trimester as defined by the host institution
- b) except via a research-based program, be undertaken through attendance at face-to-face course delivery, on the host institution premises or such other physical premises that the host institution has approved for delivery of the teaching component of the course (and not via online, pre-recorded or other remote technology)
- c) be a course undertaken at the host institution, for which the applicant's home university has agreed to grant full-time academic credit towards a Bachelor Degree, Bachelor Honours Degree or eligible undergraduate language-focused course (see Section 4.1). Courses that provide whole or partial credit towards a concurrent Diploma (in addition to full-time academic credit towards a Bachelor Degree, Bachelor Honours Degree or eligible undergraduate language-focused course) are also permitted,
- d) for scholars studying a research-based program, be supervised by an academic from their host institution (and scholars should in their application describe the benefits of undertaking their research program at their proposed host location). Scholars undertaking a study component that is research-based only (i.e. no coursework) do not need to enrol at the host institution. Scholars undertaking coursework as part of their study component must enrol at the host institution and ensure the course is credited towards their home degree, and
- e) not exceed the maximum tuition fees payable in Section 5.4.2 (for fee-paying students).

Scholarship programs may include up to one academic year of study components. Each study period as part of the academic year is regarded as a separate study component.

When there is a period between the end of one study component and the commencement of the next study component, and a scholar is not undertaking a full-time internship or full-time language training, the scholar must apply (and have obtained approval) for a permitted gap covering that period.

Study components must not be undertaken at an offshore campus of an Australian university or a university established or headquartered outside the host location. In exceptional circumstances, DFAT may waive this requirement where the scholar is able to establish that there is a strong demonstrated benefit to the overall NCP Scholarship Program.

5.2.2. Internships

Internships enable scholars to have immersive work experiences relevant to their academic course and professional development. Internships can include (but are not limited to) clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies.

An internship component as part of an NCP scholarship program must be undertaken:

- a) full-time (between 22 and 38 hours per week) prior or subsequent to a study component (subject to Section 5.1(a)) (The minimum duration of any full-time internship placement is one week. The total cumulative duration of all full-time internships undertaken during a scholarship program must not exceed six months), or
- b) part-time, concurrent with a study component or a full-time language training component (there is no maximum duration), and

- c) in the primary host location, or in a secondary host location, in accordance with Section 5.5.
- d) with a single internship host organisation.

Unless otherwise approved by DFAT, an internship must be undertaken face-to-face at the premises of the host organisation, or elsewhere in the host location where the host organisation conducts regular business. An internship must not be undertaken online or remotely.

An internship may be paid or unpaid. An internship must not incur any cost to the scholar, their home university or their host university, such as for training, program materials or delivery or staff wages. Attending informal or formal paid courses does not count as an internship.

A scholar who is currently employed with an organisation must not undertake an internship with that organisation as part of their NCP program (whether the internship is paid or unpaid).

Internships and mentorships do not need to be confirmed at the time of application.

5.2.3. Mentorships

A mentorship may only be undertaken concurrently with a full-time study component, full-time internship component, or full-time language training component.

A mentorship is negotiated between the scholar and mentor and can be undertaken face-to-face or via remote methods. There is no minimum time commitment for a mentorship.

5.2.4. Language training

DFAT strongly encourages scholars to undertake language training as part of their scholarship program (in addition to any language learning that may be part of the scholar's study component). Language training as part of a scholarship program must be:

- a) undertaken in the same host location as a study component or a full-time internship component
- b) in an official language, or a commonly spoken other language or dialect (other than English), of the host location where it is undertaken
- c) delivered formally and face-to-face by a single bona fide training provider (as assessed by DFAT in its sole and absolute discretion) and undertaken either:
 - full-time, which means for a minimum of 15 contact hours per week. (The minimum duration of any full-time language training is one week. There is no maximum duration, noting the requirements about maximum scholarship duration in Section 5.1 and the maximum amount payable for tuition fees in Section 5.4.2), or
 - part-time, concurrently with a full-time study component or a full-time internship component (there is no maximum duration, noting the requirements about maximum scholarship duration in Section 5.1 and the maximum amount payable for tuition fees in Section 5.4.2).

5.3. What the scholarship grant money cannot be used for

You cannot use the grant for the following activities:

- purchase of land
- wages
- major capital expenditure
- covering retrospective costs

- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- subsidy of general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, phone and rent
- major construction/capital works, or
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility

5.4. Scholarship benefits

5.4.1. Overview

Scholars are responsible for their own financial circumstances while undertaking their NCP scholarship program. Before applying for a scholarship, an applicant must consider their personal circumstances and ensure that undertaking a scholarship program will not overextend them financially. In particular, applicants should be aware that exchange rates can fluctuate.

Scholars may receive the scholarship benefits described in Sections 5.4.2, 5.4.3 and 5.4.4 during the scholarship term, depending on their scholarship program and whether they continue to meet the requirements for each benefit in the scholarship agreement.

The terms on which scholars will receive scholarship benefits are set out in the scholarship agreement. In most cases, scholarship benefits are paid as a reimbursement to the scholar or directly to the host institution, host organisation, language training provider or relevant third party, and not to the scholar in advance. Any scholarship benefits received must only be used for the purpose of the scholarship program.

All amounts in this Section or the scholarship agreement are expressed in Australian dollars. Where amounts are converted into foreign currency (including where an invoice is paid on behalf of the scholar, or the scholar's eligibility for a reimbursement needs to be determined), the then current exchange rate will be applied, as determined by DFAT.

Not all expenditure during a scholarship program is eligible for grant funding. The DFAT delegate makes the final decision on eligible expenditure and may provide guidance if required.

5.4.2. Tuition fees

Tuition fees are payable directly to the relevant host institution and any language training provider, up to the maximum amount for each activity set out in the following table. A scholar is responsible for any tuition fees in excess of the maximum amount per activity.

Item	Activity	Length of activity	Expenses payable under the Tuition fees	Maximum amount of expenses payable as Tuition fees for the activity
1	Study component	Any period up to a maximum of two semesters or three trimesters (as defined by the host institution)	<p>1. Course fees at the host institution where the scholar is a fee-paying international student.</p> <p>The tuition fees only cover course fees at the host institution if no current exchange agreement relevant to the scholar's field of study is available between the home university and the host institution. The scholar's entitlement to payment of course fees is considered and approved as part of the initial acceptance of applications. Any requested changes after applications have been submitted are subject to consideration and approval on a case-by-case basis as a variation request under the scholarship agreement, in accordance with the process in Section 12.3.</p> <p>2. Applicable student services and amenities fees at the host institution.</p> <p>3. Other amounts payable to the host institution where all of the following requirements are met:</p> <p>(a) the total of the costs is more than \$200</p> <p>(b) the costs are not covered under an applicable exchange agreement place</p> <p>(c) the host institution certifies in writing that the costs are mandatory for completion of the study component, and</p> <p>(d) an invoice for the relevant amount is issued by the host institution.</p>	Up to \$10,000 per semester or \$6,666 per trimester

Item	Activity	Length of activity	Expenses payable under the Tuition fees	Maximum amount of expenses payable as Tuition fees for the activity
			Examples of this cost may include compulsory course field trips within the host location; fieldwork research costs; compulsory materials or equipment (e.g. safety or personal protective equipment); or the use of the host institution's facilities by scholars undertaking a research-based study component ('bench fees').	
2	Language training	The minimum duration of any full-time language training is one week. There is no maximum duration for full-time language training or part-time language training (noting the requirements about maximum scholarship duration in Section 5.1)	Fees for the language training payable to the language training provider	Up to \$10,000

The maximum amount that a scholar will be paid as tuition fees for activities undertaken during a scholarship program (i.e. all study components and language training components combined) is \$20,000 ('Tuition fees cap'). Once the tuition fees cap is reached, the scholar will be responsible for the balance of any outstanding tuition fees.

5.4.3. Allowances

- a) **A one-off travel allowance** of \$3,000 paid to a scholar (\$1,500 paid prior to travel from Australia to the scholar's first host location, and \$1,500 paid upon return from the host location to Australia at the end of the scholarship term) to contribute to costs associated with the scholar's travel to and from the host location.
- b) **A one-off establishment allowance** of \$3,000 paid to a scholar to contribute to the costs associated with the scholar settling in at their host location.
- c) **A scholarship allowance** of up to \$3,000 paid to a scholar as a monthly stipend during the scholarship term to contribute to the scholar's basic living costs in their host location.

- d) **A mental health allowance** of up to \$3000, reimbursed to a scholar to contribute to the cost of professional mental health services (such as by qualified/registered psychologists and social workers to assist with personal issues, such as coping with life changes and fostering mental wellbeing).
- e) **A one-off fellow allowance** of \$1,000 paid to fellows (see Section 6.3) to purchase study materials for use during their scholarship and to contribute to costs associated with the fellow's promotion of the NCP. Scholars who are appointed as fellow under more than one applicable award will receive a fellow allowance of \$1,000 for each position.

5.4.4. Other scholarship benefits

Scholars also receive:

Insurance

Health and travel insurance while outside Australia, are provided under an existing policy of cover and are subject to certain terms and exclusions.

Allocation of case manager

A case manager from the contractor is assigned to the scholar for the duration of their scholarship term. Their services include pre-departure briefings, advice on health and travel insurance, and payment of scholarship benefits.

Private sector sponsorship

DFAT has entered into sponsorship agreements with organisations (sponsors) for the provision of in-kind benefits to the NCP. These benefits may include paid internships, training opportunities (such as leadership training) and other benefits. Sponsorship packages may vary from sponsor to sponsor.

Following the award of NCP scholarships in a round, details of sponsorship opportunities and relevant expression of interest processes are provided to all scholars. Scholars may apply directly to a private sector sponsor for a sponsorship and are expected to undergo any required assessment processes including interviews.

When an NCP scholar is selected by a sponsor for a sponsorship, a legally binding agreement is put in place between the sponsor and an NCP scholar regarding benefits and obligations under a sponsored scholarship. A sponsored scholar must negotiate directly with the sponsor on the timing of any sponsorship benefits such as training opportunities.

Sponsors are able to associate with the NCP such as through the sponsored scholar's title of 'NCP (Business Name) Scholar for (Host Location)' and at NCP events where the sponsor is the host.

5.5. Eligible host locations

5.5.1. Host locations

Scholarship programs must be conducted only in the following host locations:

Bangladesh	French Polynesia	Maldives	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Bhutan	Hong Kong	Marshall Islands	Palau	Taiwan
Brunei Darussalam	India	Mongolia	Papua New Guinea	Thailand
Cambodia	Indonesia	Myanmar	Philippines	Timor-Leste
China	Japan	Nauru	Republic of Korea	Tonga
Cook Islands	Kiribati	Nepal	Samoa	Tuvalu

Federated States of Micronesia	Laos	New Caledonia	Singapore	Vanuatu
Fiji	Malaysia	Niue	Solomon Islands	Vietnam

5.5.2. Primary host location

A primary host location is the host location for which the scholarship is awarded. The most substantial study component and the majority of the duration of the scholarship program must be completed in the primary location.

5.5.3. Secondary host locations

A scholar may undertake their scholarship program in more than one host location and/or at more than one host institution or host organisation. Where an applicant proposes to undertake a scholarship program in more than one host location, the applicant must outline in their application the rationale for including the secondary host location(s) in the scholarship program.

The total time spent at all secondary host locations combined must not exceed the total time spent at the primary host location.

Inclusion of a secondary host location in a scholarship program does not entitle a scholar to any additional travel allowance or establishment allowance (see Section 5.4.3).

5.5.4. Travel requirements

Scholars are responsible for making their own travel arrangements, including obtaining and complying with appropriate visas for each host location in which the scholar will undertake their scholarship program. Scholars are responsible for the costs of applying for or obtaining visas. Family members visiting or accompanying a scholar must obtain their own visas. There are no additional entitlements for accompanying family members.

Applicants must carefully consider the risks of travel to the proposed host locations and regions before deciding whether to apply. Scholars must make their own independent enquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel and to the host location(s), and ensure they are fully informed about the risks at all times.

Scholars must obtain travel medical advice, including any necessary vaccinations, prior to commencing travel.

Scholars must not travel to a host location or region within a host location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller advice is 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' (see www.smartraveller.gov.au). Where the Smartraveller advice is raised to 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' for a host location during the application process or while a scholar is on award, the scholar's case manager will work with the scholar to identify an alternative host location if required.

Scholars are required to acknowledge in their scholarship agreement (see Section 10.1) that they have considered the risks carefully and investigated safety precautions before deciding to travel to any host location. Scholars must work with their home university to address the issues identified in the risk assessment for host locations undertaken in Section 2.4.

5.6. Permitted gaps

During the scholarship term gaps may be approved on the terms in the scholarship agreement. During such gaps the scholar is not required to undertake the scholarship program on a full-time basis in accordance with Section 5.1(c).

A permitted gap counts towards the maximum 19 months of the scholarship term and must not result in the scholarship term exceeding 19 months.

A permitted gap must not incur any additional costs to the NCP Scholarship Program, the contractor, host institution(s), host organisation(s) (if any) or language training provider (if any).

A permitted gap may impact on a scholar's entitlement to insurance under the relevant policy terms. Scholars are responsible for informing themselves of the insurance policy terms and taking out appropriate alternative or additional insurance cover where the insurance is impacted by a permitted gap.

A permitted gap may be either:

- a) Gap leave - when there is a gap between the end of and subsequent commencement of a full-time study component, full-time language training component or full-time internship component and is for a maximum of:
 - i. 28 days in the first 12-month period of an NCP scholarship program (calculated on a pro rata basis if the scholarship program is shorter than 12 months in duration), and
 - ii. 14 days in any subsequent period of an NCP scholarship program (in addition to any unused gap leave under Section 5.6(a)(i), and calculated on a pro rata basis if the scholarship program is shorter than 19 months in duration).

Gap leave is calculated in calendar days between full-time components.

When applying for gap leave, scholars must demonstrate it is reasonably necessary in order to complete their scholarship program, with no reasonable alternatives. Scholars must apply for gap leave as soon as possible on becoming aware of the requirement for gap leave. Scholars must remain in one of the eligible host locations during any period of gap leave.

Scholarship benefits are unaffected by approved gap leave.

- b) **Leave of absence** - for a maximum of:
 - i. 14 days in the first 12-month period of an NCP scholarship program (calculated on a pro rata basis if the scholarship program is shorter than 12 months in duration), and
 - ii. 7 days in any subsequent period of an NCP scholarship program (in addition to any unused leave of absence under Section 5.6(b)(i), and calculated on a pro rata basis if the scholarship program is shorter than 19 months in duration).

Leave of absence is calculated in calendar days between full-time components.

A leave of absence may be for personal or professional development, compassionate and compelling reasons, or for issues relating to the scholar's safety and security.

Scholarship benefits are unaffected by approved leave of absence.

- c) **Suspension** - a scholar may apply for a suspension on the terms in the NCP scholarship agreement, including where a scholar has exhausted their entitlement to apply for gap leave or leave of absence. DFAT may require a suspension in accordance with the processes set out in the scholarship agreement.

During any period of suspension there is no entitlement to, or payment of, NCP scholarship benefits or payments for costs incurred during the suspension.

5.7. Community engagement and advocacy

The Australian Government, including through its overseas diplomatic missions and offices, may invite scholars to participate in events during their NCP scholarship program, in addition to the formal requirements of the scholarship program.

We encourage scholars to share their experiences of their scholarship program with the NCP Secretariat, other students and their community, including through engaging with the NCP alumni community and through appropriate use of social media. We encourage scholars to participate in activities that promote the NCP and to advocate for the NCP, including the benefits of studying and undertaking work placements in the Indo-Pacific.

6. Assessment criteria

6.1. Assessment criteria

In addition to meeting the eligibility requirements, applicants will be assessed in accordance with the process in Section 8 and against the following assessment criteria (for both the written application and at interview). Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview.

Criterion 1: Academic excellence at the tertiary level (25 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the applicant's demonstrated higher-order cognitive skills, creativity, innovation, communication skills, problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills in their university study. Applicants may also draw on academic achievements such as academic awards and commendations, publications, or other examples of academic excellence at the tertiary level. High school academic achievements will not be considered.

Criterion 2: Leadership and engagement in the community (25 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the applicant's demonstrated leadership and engagement in the community, including in volunteer and not-for-profit roles, employment and/or other activities they have undertaken locally, nationally, overseas and/or at their university. Applicants should provide an example of a leadership role they have undertaken.

Criterion 3: Adaptability and resilience (25 per cent weighting)

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

Criterion 4: Ability to contribute to NCP's strategic objective and outcomes (25 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the applicant's demonstrated understanding of the strategic objective and outcomes of the NCP program, and how the applicant and their proposed scholarship program would contribute to the NCP strategic objective and outcomes, including on return to Australia.

6.2. Other considerations

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

- a) Applicants proposing:
 - longer periods of study components
 - an internship component or a mentorship
 - a period (or longer periods) of language training, and/or
 - a well thought out scholarship program with coherent correlation across the proposed study component, language training and internship component
- b) achieving diversity of placement across host locations

- c) representation from diverse student groups including but not limited to, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, students from a low socio-economic status background, students from regional/remote areas or universities, students who are first in their immediate family to attend university, students across the genders, female students studying in non-traditional fields, students with a disability, and students from a non-English speaking background
- d) diversity across fields of study and Australian universities
- e) how the proposal contributes to value with relevant money.

6.3. Selection of fellows

Fellows are NCP scholars who are encouraged to play a strong leadership role in promoting the NCP and its objectives during their scholarship and afterwards as part of the NCP alumni network.

Selection panels will nominate, from among highly-ranked applicants, to be NCP fellows:

- a) one fellow for each host location
- b) one First Nations fellow
- c) one ASEAN fellow, one Pacific fellow and one Climate Change fellow, chosen from scholars whose proposed program closely aligns, and advances the program's objectives, with the relevant organisation/subject.

DFAT's delegate decides which candidates are offered a fellowship. DFAT may establish further categories of fellows at its discretion.

Fellows are entitled to a fellows allowance (see Section 5.4.3)

7. How to apply

Before applying, each applicant must read these Guidelines and the sample scholarship agreement which can be found at [GrantConnect](#). Any alterations or addenda² will be published on GrantConnect. By registering on GrantConnect, individuals will be notified automatically of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for Australian Government grants information.

7.1. Overview

DFAT or the contractor will contact individuals nominated by Australian universities by email and provide instructions on how to submit an application.

Each applicant must:

- a) complete the online application available from a link provided to the applicant by DFAT
- b) provide all information requested
- c) address all eligibility requirements and assessment criteria
- d) include all necessary attachments, and
- e) submit their application online by the closing time.

² Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents.

An applicant may only submit one scholarship program proposal. An applicant cannot change their primary host location in their application once it has been submitted.

Each applicant is responsible for ensuring their application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code 1995* (Cth). Applications may be excluded from consideration, offers revoked or a scholarship terminated if DFAT reasonably believes that false or misleading information has formed a component of an application. Further terms relating to the termination or cancellation of scholarship are in the scholarship agreement.

If an applicant finds an error in their application after submitting it, they should email DFAT immediately at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au. DFAT does not have to accept any additional information and DFAT will not accept requests to correct an application after the closing time.

Each applicant should keep a copy of their application and any supporting documents.

DFAT will acknowledge receipt of a submitted application via an automatically generated email.

7.2. Written applications

Applicants must provide written responses to the assessment criteria. An applicant must outline their proposed scholarship program, including the mandatory study component, any proposed internships, mentorships and language training, and the host location(s) in which they intend to undertake each component. Applicants must nominate a primary host location in their application.

7.3. Referee reports

Applicants must submit two referee reports with their application, with at least one report from an academic referee.

Each referee must:

- a) comment substantively on the applicant's abilities and experience relevant to the assessment criteria, and
- b) hold a position that gives their comments credibility (for example, a position in the applicant's home university, workplace or community).

7.4. Attachments to the application

Applicants must also submit the following documentation:

- a) evidence of Australian citizenship (e.g. current Australian passport biopage or Australian citizenship certificate)
- b) a letter of current enrolment from their home university, including expected completion date for the course towards which the overseas study program will be credited
- c) a current, complete-to-date official academic transcript from their home university
- d) evidence of affiliation with their proposed host institution if applicable (applicants must liaise with their home university's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships or international office to obtain this evidence).
 - If intending to apply for an exchange place for the study component under an agreement between the applicant's home university and the host institution:
 - a copy of an exchange agreement between the applicant's home university and the host institution, or a letter from the applicant's home university outlining partnership

arrangements to allow for commencement on or between 1 January 2024 and 15 December 2024

- if intending to apply for a fee-paying place for the study component:
 - confirmation from the home university that no current exchange agreement is in place between the home university and the host institution (as described in item 1 of the table at Section 5.4.2)
- e) a letter from the applicant's home university faculty, endorsed by the home university's NCP International Liaison Officer for Scholarships, attesting to the feasibility of the applicant's proposed study component, with reference to the requirements in Section 5.2.1.
- f) a current CV outlining the applicant's work experience, community engagement activities (for example, volunteering, memberships, mentoring) and extra-curricular interests.
- g) photo identification

Applicants should only attach requested documents. Information that has not been requested will not be considered.

7.5. Timing of grant opportunity processes

The list below summaries the indicative key dates and steps in the selection process. DFAT may amend the timeframe at any time by posting a notice on GrantConnect.

Expected timing for this grant opportunity

- a) Guidelines published on GrantConnect (<https://www.grants.gov.au>): **29 June 2023**
- b) Australian universities nominate students: **29 June 2023 – 25 July 2023**
- c) Nominations close at 11.30pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST): **25 July 2023**
- d) Nominated students receive an invitation to complete an online application. Applicants submit their application and supporting documentation: **26 July 2023 – 22 August 2023**
- e) Applications close at 11.30pm AEST ('Closing Time'): **22 August 2023**
- f) Applications are shortlisted. Shortlisted applicants are notified: **September 2023**
- g) Shortlisted applicants are interviewed: **September – October 2023**
- h) Selections are finalised. Successful and unsuccessful applicants are notified of the outcome of their application: **November 2023**
- i) Scholars are announced and their details published on the NCP website: **November – December 2023**
- j) Scholars commence their scholarship: **1 January 2024 – 15 December 2024**

7.6. Questions during the application process

Please direct any questions during the application period to the NCP Secretariat at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au. If applicable, answers to questions will be posted on GrantConnect.

The NCP Secretariat will not respond to questions received after **15 August 2023**.

8. The grant selection process

8.1. Assessment of applications and who will assess applications

DFAT will only accept and consider applications submitted by the closing time. DFAT assesses applications as follows:

Stage 1: Eligibility screening

Only applications that meet all eligibility requirements will be assessed in Stage 2.

Stage 2: Assessment of written applications against assessment criteria

Eligible applications are assessed through a competitive process by a panel of independent assessors who are experienced in assessing Commonwealth grant applications or similar processes managed by Commonwealth departments. All assessors will be required to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRGs.

Each eligible application is assessed against the assessment criteria and against other applications. The merits of each application are considered based on:

- a) how well it addresses the assessment criteria, and
- b) how it compares to other applications.

Referee reports will be considered by assessors in the assessment process.

The assessors provide an order of merit to DFAT. The NCP Secretariat determines which applications are shortlisted for interview based on the order of merit proposed by the assessment panel and other considerations outlined in Section 6.2.

Stage 3: Interviews

DFAT or the contractor invites shortlisted applicants to participate in an interview in accordance with the timetable in Section 7.5.

Members of interview panels have relevant expertise and are drawn from: senior government officials, private sector representatives, experts on Indo-Pacific affairs and international education specialists.

Panels rate each applicant on the basis of the assessment criteria and other considerations outlined in Section 6.2. Panels provide an order of merit to DFAT.

8.2. Who will approve the award of scholarships?

The NCP Secretariat moderates the interview panel recommendations for consistency across panels and with the NCP strategic objective, and presents the findings to the delegate (DFAT First Assistant Secretary responsible for the NCP) who decides the applicants to be awarded a scholarship, taking into account recommendations of the interview panels and the availability of NCP program funds.

The delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- a) awarding of scholarships
- b) grant funding amount to be awarded, and
- c) terms and conditions of the scholarship.

There is no appeal mechanism for the delegate's decision to award or not award a scholarship.

DFAT will advise the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the outcome of the round.

9. Notification of application outcomes

DFAT or the contractor will advise applicants of the outcome of their application via email. DFAT will advise successful applicants of any specific conditions attached to the scholarship. DFAT will also advise home universities of the successful applicants from their university.

9.1. Feedback on applications

Advice to scholarship applicants is available on the DFAT NCP website, including guidance on the features of strong applications in past rounds.

Individual feedback will not be provided to unsuccessful applicants. Unsuccessful applicants may apply for any future grant opportunities under the NCP. Any subsequent application will be assessed on its merits, based on the guidelines in place at the time.

9.2. Offer and acceptance processes

Each offer of a scholarship is subject to the applicant accepting and signing a scholarship agreement and being able to obtain appropriate visa(s) for their host location(s).

10. Successful grant applications

10.1. Scholarship agreement

A scholar must enter into a legally binding scholarship agreement with the Commonwealth before scholarship benefits can be paid to the scholar or a third party and before the scholar commences the scholarship program.

Applicants should read the sample scholarship agreement before submitting their application. The Australian Government will not be liable for any costs incurred by the scholar or a third party in relation to a scholarship program before a scholarship agreement is entered into.

The scholarship agreement will detail the scholar's responsibilities in relation to the scholarship program and the scholarship benefits payable by the Australian Government. The scholarship agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the delegate. DFAT will identify these in the scholarship agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the scholarship agreement.

The version of the Guidelines in place at the closing date/time of this round will apply to the scholarship program.

10.2. Specific legislation and policies

Scholars must comply with all relevant Australian law, as well as the local laws and regulations of their host locations, while in Australia and in host locations on scholarship. This includes compliance with laws relating to child protection and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

DFAT does not tolerate exploitation, abuse or harassment. This applies within DFAT and extends to those we work with. NCP scholars must read and adhere to DFAT's [Child Protection Policy](#) and [Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#), which set out expectations in relation to appropriate behaviours and reporting requirements. DFAT takes all allegations and reported incidents of exploitation, abuse and harassment seriously. NCP scholars also have an obligation to comply with their university's policies on child protection and PSEAH.

Scholars must take into account the [Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector](#).

10.3. How DFAT pays the grant

The scholarship agreement provides information on when and how scholarship benefits will be provided to scholars.

Some scholarship benefits will be paid directly to the scholar. Other scholarship benefits, such as tuition fees, will be paid directly to the host institution or language training provider, as relevant.

10.4. Taxation

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. DFAT recommends scholars seek independent professional advice on their taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). DFAT does not provide advice on particular taxation circumstances.

11. Announcement of grants

DFAT may publicise details of individual scholarships and scholars including, but not limited to:

- a) names of successful scholars, their home university, host location(s), host institution, host organisation and language training provider
- b) description of scholarship programs being supported (including timing)
- c) the amount of funding awarded, and
- d) photographs of scholars, both provided by scholars or taken at DFAT and other events.

12. How DFAT monitors grant activity

Requirements and expectations for monitoring a scholar's scholarship program are set out in the scholarship agreement.

12.1. Keeping DFAT informed

Scholars must inform DFAT or the contractor if anything is likely to affect their ability to undertake their scholarship program, in accordance with the scholarship agreement.

12.2. Reporting

Scholars must report in accordance with the scholarship agreement.

12.3. Variations to scholarship programs

After an offer is accepted, scholars may apply to vary their scholarship program to:

- a) incorporate a new internship or mentorship
- b) increase the duration of the study component(s), language training or internship component, or
- c) change any other aspect of their scholarship program where exceptional circumstances prevent them from completing the scholarship program as initially proposed.

Any request for a variation must be made on a program variation request form provided by the case manager, at least one month in advance of the proposed variation commencing, or such shorter period as required by the circumstances.

The decision to approve a variation to a scholarship program will be made on a case-by-case basis by DFAT or the contractor, in its sole and absolute discretion. Without limitation, DFAT or the contractor, may consider:

- a) the merits of the request (and funding being available, if required) in respect of achieving the NCP strategic objective and outcomes
- b) demonstrated coherence across study components, any internship or mentorship components or any language training components of the scholarship program, and
- c) ensuring that the scholarship program remains consistent with the eligibility requirements.

Scholars are liable for any financial commitments made by them in relation to their proposed change of scholarship program where those commitments are made before receiving formal advice granting the scholarship program variation.

12.4. Compliance visits

We may visit scholars during or at the completion of their scholarship grant activity to review their compliance with the scholarship agreement. We will provide scholars with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

12.5. Evaluation

The Australian Government reports on and evaluates the NCP Scholarship Program. DFAT and the contractor may use information about scholars and their scholarship program, home university, host institution, host organisation and language training provider for performance monitoring and management of the NCP, and to evaluate how effective the program is in achieving the NCP's strategic objective and outcomes. DFAT may also draw on information to create testimonials for NCP promotion.

DFAT and the contractor will monitor performance and manage scholarships through the NCP Online website. Information about applicants, program outcomes and performance will also be collected.

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

NCP scholar alumni are expected to participate in surveys and other program monitoring and evaluation activities after completion of their scholarship program, as required by DFAT.

13. Probity

The Australian Government will ensure the grant opportunity process is fair, in accordance with the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

The Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme provides the public with visibility of the nature, level and extent of foreign influence on Australia's government and politics. It is recommended that you review obligations and responsibilities under the scheme at <https://www.ag.gov.au/integrity/foreign-influence-transparency-scheme>.

DFAT may change these guidelines from time to time. When this happens, the revised Guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

13.1. Enquiries and feedback

Enquiries and feedback about this scholarship opportunity should be sent to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

If an applicant, or any other person, does not agree with the way DFAT has handled their feedback/complaint, they can refer the matter to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with DFAT.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

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.

13.2. Conflicts of interest

Any conflict of interest could affect the performance of the NCP Program or an NCP scholarship. An Australian university that makes a nomination must disclose any conflict of interest in relation to a nomination in writing to ncp.secretariat@dfat.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 such steps as reasonably required by DFAT to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest.

Applicants must disclose any conflict of interest in relation to an application in writing to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au at the time of submitting the application or when the conflict of interest arises or is likely to arise. Applicants must take such steps as DFAT reasonably requires to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest for Australian government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct (section 13(7)) of the *Public Service Act 1999*. Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

13.3. Privacy

DFAT and its contractors are bound by the provisions of the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Privacy Act), including the Australian Privacy Principles which prescribe rules for handling personal information.

DFAT and its contractors collect personal information, including from home universities and other third parties, in relation to applications under the NCP. Types of personal information collected include personal details (name, gender, date of birth and contact details), academic results and equity information.

Personal information will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which it was collected, or otherwise in accordance with the Privacy Act. DFAT and its contractors collect personal information for the purpose of administering the NCP, including the following purposes:

- a) assessing applications,
- b) administering and performance monitoring of the NCP,
- c) promoting the NCP, including to scholarship recipients and to media representatives and in promotional material, information and publications in hardcopy and/or on the internet, and

- d) inviting NCP scholars and alumni to relevant functions and events held in Australia and overseas.

In accordance with the Privacy Act, information collected for a primary purpose may sometimes be used or disclosed for a related secondary purpose. For example, DFAT may disclose personal information in relation to applications under the NCP Scholarship Program to:

- a) other Australian Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Education and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- b) State and Territory Governments
- c) Australian Parliamentary members and committees of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia
- d) contractors and agents of DFAT
- e) Australian universities, including to the NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships
- f) potential internship/mentorship host organisations, language training providers, host location governments/authorities or non-government organisations. These may be foreign organisations (noting that they may not be bound by Australian privacy legislation or equivalent privacy legislation in their own countries)
- g) scholarship sponsors, including but not limited to companies or professional bodies, and
- h) media representatives, including foreign media representatives.

DFAT may also disclose personal information in relation to applications under the NCP Scholarship Program to overseas recipients in accordance with the Privacy Act. This may include host institutions, potential internship/mentorship host organisations, language training providers, host location governments/authorities and non-government organisations.

If an applicant does not consent to DFAT or its contractor(s) collecting, using and disclosing their personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act, DFAT may not be able to process their application.

DFAT's [Privacy Policy](#) contains information about DFAT's collection, use, disclosure and storage of personal information, including sensitive information, and how individuals may access and correct personal information that we hold.

13.4. Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, an applicant or scholar must agree not to disclose to any person, other than DFAT, any confidential information relating to the application and/or scholarship agreement, without DFAT's prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where the applicant or scholar is required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

DFAT may at any time, require the applicant to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of DFAT's confidential information in a form DFAT considers acceptable.

DFAT will keep any information in connection with the scholarship agreement confidential to the extent that it meets one of the conditions below:

1. the applicant/scholar clearly identifies the information as confidential and explain why DFAT should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive

3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to the applicant/scholar or someone else.

DFAT will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the NCP Scholarship Program effectively
- employees and contractors of DFAT so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse DFAT programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- 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
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in NCP Scholarship Program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, or
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The scholarship agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the scholarship agreement.

13.5. Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (Cth) (FOI Act).

Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government, subject to exemptions.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: The Director, Freedom of Information and Privacy Law Section
 Legal Division
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 R.G. Casey Building, John McEwen Crescent
 BARTON ACT 0221

By email: foi@dfat.gov.au

14. Glossary

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which they live, or formerly lived

Academic transcript

an official document issued by the home university as a record of all completed units and results throughout the student's enrolment

Academic year

the annual period of study sessions of a home university and/or host institution

Administering entity

the entity responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes

Applicant

a person who is applying or has applied for an NCP scholarship.

Application

an application for a scholarship under the NCP Scholarship Program

Assessment criteria

the principles or standards against which applications will be judged, as set out in Section 6

Australian university

a registered higher education provider for the purposes of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (Cth) that is registered in an 'Australian university' category.

Bachelor Degree

Bachelor Level 7 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Bachelor honours degree

Bachelor Honours Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework

Case manager

staff of the contractor assigned to a scholar and responsible for providing that scholar with information and support to undertake their scholarship program

Closing date/time

the date and time beyond which applications will not be accepted, as specified at Section 7.5

Commencement

the date in the application that the scholar is required to commence the first component of their scholarship program

Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)

establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.

Concurrent diploma

undergraduate studies at a diploma level as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework, undertaken concurrently with a Bachelor degree or Bachelor honours degree.

Confidential information

information which satisfies the criteria listed at Section 13.5 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

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 NCP Scholarship Program

Contractor (the contractor)

DFAT's Managed Administration and Support Services Contractor for the New Colombo Plan

Disability

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.

Eligibility requirements

the mandatory requirements which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility requirements

Establishment allowance

the meaning in Section 5.4.3(b)

Fellow

the meaning in Section 6.3

Fellow allowance

the meaning in Section 5.4.3(e)

Foreign Arrangements Scheme

the [Foreign Arrangements Scheme](#) is administered by DFAT to implement *Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020*

Gender

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).

Grant

for the purposes of the CGRGs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:

- under which relevant money³ or other [Consolidated Revenue Fund](#) (CRF) money⁴ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth, and
- which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.

Grant program

a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a DFAT Portfolio Budget Program.

GrantConnect

the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs.

Home university

the Australian university which nominated the applicant(s), at which an applicant or scholar is enrolled while applying for and undertaking their scholarship program and which will confer the student's degree upon completion.

Host institution

a university or other education provider where the scholar undertakes their study component in the host location.

Host location

the geographic location(s) in the Indo-Pacific, as listed in section 5.5.1, in which the scholar undertakes their scholarship program.

Host organisation

the organisation at which the scholar undertakes an internship or mentorship in the host location

Insurance

the meaning in Section 5.4.4

Internship

work experience in which a scholar has learning goals relevant to their academic course and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies

Internship component

an internship undertaken as part of a scholarship program that meets the eligibility requirements in Section 5.2.2

Language training

training in a language undertaken as part of a scholarship program that meets the eligibility requirements in Section 5.2.4

³ Relevant money is defined in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* ('**PGPA Act**'). See section 8, Dictionary.

⁴ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Language training provider

a bona fide provider of language training at which a scholar undertakes language training in the host location

Low socio-economic status

students who are from a low socio-economic background, as measured by the lowest quartile of the ABS Socio-Economic Index for Areas Index of Education and Occupation measured at Statistical Area 1 level

Mental health allowance

the meaning in Section 5.4.3(d)

Mental health service

professional counselling to foster a state of well-being, in which the scholar realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

Mentorship

a developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person guides a less experienced or less knowledgeable person, relevant to work, career, or professional development

Mobility program

see the meaning of **New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program** below

New Colombo Plan (NCP)

the NCP Scholarship Program, NCP Mobility Program, and NCP Alumni Program

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Liaison Officer for Scholarships

the person(s) designated by an Australian university to submit student nominations and receive NCP Scholarship Program updates

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program

the program of that name administered by DFAT

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program

the meaning in Section 2.2

New Colombo Plan website

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan>

NCP Online

DFAT's online system for managing nominations, applications and scholarships

Outcome

the meaning in Section 2

Offshore campus

of an Australian university refers to an Australian university that has a branch campus in a location other than Australia

PBS Program

described within the entity's [Portfolio Budget Statement](#), PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.

Permitted gap

the meaning in Section 5.6.

Personal information

the same meaning as in the Privacy Act, which defines Personal Information as *“information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is readily identifiable: (a) whether the information or opinion is true or not; and (b) whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.”*

Primary host location

the meaning in Section 5.5.2

Privacy Act

the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)

Private sector organisation

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

the NCP Scholarship Program.

Reasonable accommodation

the provision of support, modifications and/or adjustments that meet the individual needs of scholars with disabilities to enable their participation in the NCP on an equal basis with other scholars

Regional/remote

a region designated as regional or remote by the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard

Scholar

an applicant awarded an NCP scholarship

Scholarship

An award under the NCP Scholarship Program, including the relevant scholarship benefits

Scholarship agreement

the agreement entered into between the Commonwealth and a scholar prior to the start of their scholarship program, in substantially the form of the example provided on the NCP Website

Scholarship allowance

the meaning in Section 5.4.3(c)

Scholarship benefits

travel Allowance, establishment allowance, fellow allowance (if applicable), scholarship allowance, tuition fees (if applicable), mental health allowance and insurance as described in Section 5, and any other financial or other assistance that may be available to a scholar based on the individual circumstances of a scholar's scholarship program, including as provided by private sector organisations

Scholarship program

the study component, internship component, mentorship activities and language training that applicants propose in their application (subject to any approved variations under the scholarship agreement in accordance with the process in Section 12.3)

Scholarship program commencement date

the date in the scholarship application on which the scholar is required to commence the first component of the scholarship program or such other later date in accordance with the scholarship agreement

Scholarship program completion date

the date in the scholarship application on which the scholar is required to complete the scholarship program or such other later date as agreed in writing by the parties. The completion date will be the final date of the scholar's last component which would be either the final date for assessment of a study component or language training component, or the final date of the internship.

Scholarship term

From the scholarship program commencement date to the scholarship program completion date, including any period(s) of a permitted gap

Secondary host location

the meaning in Section 5.5.3

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 to scholars, such as training opportunities

Strategic objective

the meaning in Section 2.1

Study component

An approved course of study at a host institution as part of a scholar's scholarship program that meets the eligibility requirements in Section 5.2.1

Travel allowance

the meaning in Section 5.4.3(a)

Tuition fees

the monetary contribution available towards a scholar's tuition fees for a study component and language training (if any) as in Section 5.4.2

Undergraduate course

As defined by the Department of Education in Higher Education Administrative Information for Providers, an undergraduate course of study is:

- an undergraduate certificate
- a diploma that is not accredited as a VET award
- an advanced diploma that is not accredited as a VET award
- an associate degree
- a bachelor degree; or
- an honours program

Note – as outlined in Section 4.1, NCP scholars must be enrolled in a Bachelor or Bachelor Honours degree at an Australian university, unless they are studying an eligible undergraduate language-focused qualification.

Value with money

refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources, as determined from a variety of considerations. When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:

- a) the quality of the project proposal and activities
- b) fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives
- c) that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved, and
- d) the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.



Australian Government



NEW COLOMBO PLAN

Connect to Australia's future - study in the region

New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2023 Round Guidelines

University nominations open:	22 June 2022
University nominations close:	11.30 pm AEST on 19 July 2022
Student applications open:	20 July 2022
Student applications close:	11.30 pm AEST on 16 August 2022
Commonwealth policy and administering entity:	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au . Questions should be sent no later than 2 August 2022.
Guidelines released:	28 March 2022
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted or restricted competitive

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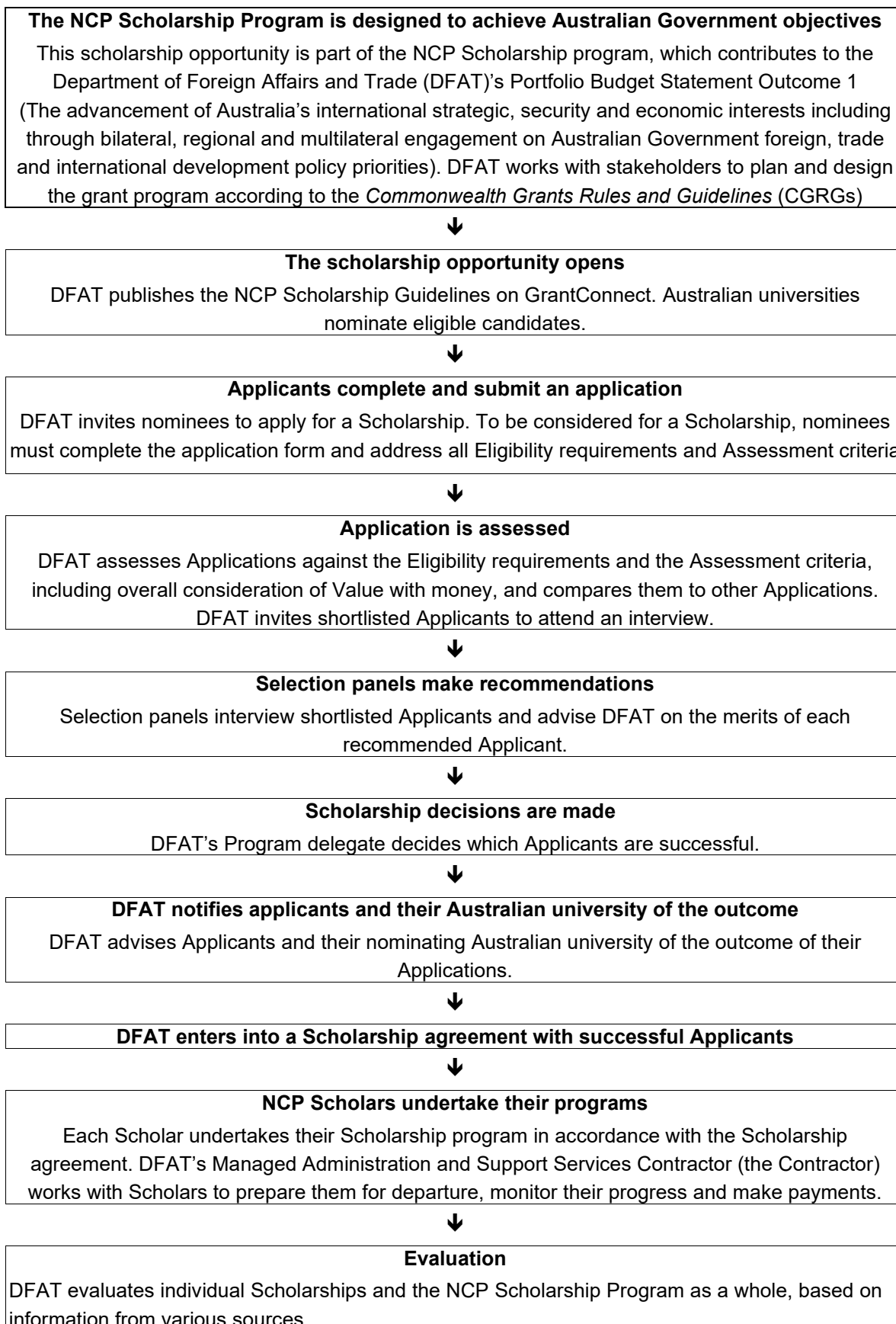
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1. New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program: 2023 Round processes



1.1. Introduction

These guidelines provide information about the 2023 round of the NCP Scholarship Program, including Eligibility requirements and processes for selecting scholarship recipients.

Before applying, Applicants must read these guidelines and the [Advice to Applicants](#). These guidelines take priority to the extent of any inconsistency with the Advice to Applicants.

These guidelines set out:

- the NCP strategic objective and outcomes
- the Eligibility requirements and Assessment criteria
- how Applications are selected
- how successful Applicants are notified
- how Scholars are supported, including payments and advice
- how evaluation of the NCP Scholarship Program may be conducted, and
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

DFAT administers the NCP according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines](#) (CGRGs).

2. About the grant program

2.1. Strategic objective and outcomes of the NCP

The NCP, launched in 2014, aims to lift knowledge in Australia of the Indo-Pacific by supporting Australian undergraduates to study and undertake internships in the region.

The NCP has two study programs: Scholarships (for study up to 19 months) and mobility grants (for shorter periods of study). Both programs include internships, mentorships and language training. The NCP also includes the NCP Alumni program, which is open to all NCP Scholarship and mobility students on completion of their award and supports alumni to maintain a connection to each other, the NCP and the Indo-Pacific region as they progress in their lives and careers.

The strategic objective of the NCP is to strengthen Australia's regional standing by building a diverse cohort of Australian alumni with deeper Indo-Pacific knowledge, capability and connections.

The intended outcomes of the NCP are:

- increased number and diversity of Australian university undergraduates with Indo-Pacific capability
- deeper people-to-people and institutional relationships between Australia and the Indo-Pacific, and
- students and alumni connected with leaders in government, business and civil society in the Indo-Pacific.

2.2. About the NCP Scholarship Program

The NCP Scholarship Program offers around 120 scholarships annually to a diverse cohort of Australian undergraduates studying a variety of disciplines in up to 40 Indo-Pacific locations. Scholars undertake offshore programs including study, language training and internship and/or mentorship for up to 19 months.

The NCP Scholarship Program has an active alumni community, supporting past Scholars to share their experiences, promote the NCP and continue to develop knowledge of and professional links with the Indo-Pacific.

Due to pandemic travel restrictions, NCP Scholars' programs may not be able to proceed in some Indo-Pacific locations as proposed. Variations to approved programs will be considered in such cases (see section 10.2).

2.3. NCP Funding

A total of \$45.087 million is available in NCP funding for the 2022-23 financial year. This funding covers all aspects of NCP administration, including the Scholarship Program and the Mobility Program.

2.4. Roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government

The NCP Secretariat within DFAT is responsible for strategic leadership, policy, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, business liaison and public diplomacy for the NCP program.

DFAT has contracted a Managed Administration and Support Services Contractor (the Contractor) to deliver administration and support services throughout the NCP Scholarship life-cycle, including during the application period, while scholars are on award and when they transition to the NCP Alumni Program.

DFAT, with the assistance of the Contractor, manages the Application and selection processes of the NCP Scholarship Program. Staff from DFAT, the Contractor and others involved in NCP selection have appropriate skills and experience to assess Applications. All personnel are subject to the CGRGs and are required to declare any conflict of interest.

DFAT is not responsible for arranging study components, Internships, Mentorships, Language training and travel arrangements (including visas and accommodation). Scholars, in consultation with their respective Home universities, Host institutions, Host organisations and/or Language training providers, and their individual Case managers (from the Contractor), are responsible for planning and carrying out their approved Scholarship program.

2.5. Roles and responsibilities of Australian universities

Each nominating Australian university

- nominates an NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships (and an alternate contact, where possible) who will submit nominations on behalf of the Australian university and receive updates during the selection process. The NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships must provide consent for their name and contact details to be published on the NCP Website and for them to be contacted by DFAT.
- may nominate up to ten students to apply for the 2023 round of the NCP Scholarship Program.
- must obtain the consent of each nominee to their personal details being provided to DFAT as part of the nomination process.
- must ensure the email addresses provided for nominees are up-to-date and accurate.
- must confirm that each Applicant's proposed study components are credit-bearing.
- should assist Applicants to obtain evidence of acceptance by their Host institution and should support them to arrange Internships, Mentorships and Language training.

- must work with their Applicants to undertake risk assessments of Host locations proposed by Applicants (see Section 5.5.4). The Australian university must also work with Scholars to undertake risk assessments of any new host locations proposed by scholars during their program.

The Australian university must approve any Internship placements proposed by Applicants.

Australian public universities have an obligation under the Foreign Arrangements Scheme when entering into arrangements with foreign entities, including certain foreign universities. Universities must comply with these obligations in relation to NCP Scholarship programs. Information about the Foreign Arrangements Scheme is available at <https://www.foreignarrangements.gov.au/>

The Contractor may contact and request the assistance of NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships when required.

2.6. Roles and responsibilities of Applicants

Each Applicant:

- must ensure their Application is complete, including supporting documentation and referee reports, and is submitted by the Closing date/time
- must meet any costs associated with preparing and lodging their Application
- is responsible for the decision to apply for and, if successful, to accept a Scholarship. 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
- must make their own enquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel, including travel to host location(s), and be fully informed about the risks at all times
- must read carefully the travel advice for their host location(s) and other relevant pages on the Smartraveller website for information about risks overseas and preparing for overseas travel
- must not travel to a Host location or region within a Host location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller advice recommends 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel', as outlined in section 5.5 (below)
- must exhibit professional behaviour throughout the selection process

Each Scholar:

- must subscribe to the relevant travel advisories on Smartraveller prior to commencement of their Scholarship
- must obtain and comply with the appropriate visa/s for the duration of their Scholarship
- must not travel to a Host location or region within a Host location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller advice recommends 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel', as outlined in section 5.5 (below)
- must register on any crisis page on the Smartraveller website related to their Host location that is activated during a major overseas incident during their Program
- must comply with their Scholarship Agreement and its incorporated documents such as the NCP Student Code of Conduct, during their Scholarship program. Evidence of unprofessional behaviour, including but not limited to, misrepresentation of the truth in an Application or at interview, or inappropriate social media posts or public commentary referencing the NCP Scholarship Program can be grounds for not awarding or for

cancelling a Scholarship (See *NCP Scholarship Agreement*, *NCP Media and Publication Guidelines*, and *NCP Student Code of Conduct*)

- must cooperate with, and comply with directions given by, DFAT and the Contractor.

2.7. Roles and responsibilities of the Managed Administration and Support Services Contractor

The Contractor is the first point of contact for Applicants and Australian universities on administrative matters, including eligibility for the NCP Scholarship Program, nominations, applications and candidate interviews.

The Contractor allocates a Case manager, and provides advice, assistance and program management, for each scholar. These services include, but are not limited to:

- a. administration of nomination, application and selection processes
- b. pre-departure support
- c. a briefing pack of relevant information
- d. Scholarship allowances
- e. advice and guidance during the Scholarship
- f. assistance with Scholarship variation requests, and
- g. assistance with a Scholar's return to Australia on completion of the Scholarship.

The Contractor will undertake regular monitoring and effective communication with DFAT, Australian universities, host institutions and other agencies to minimise the risks associated with the NCP Scholarship Program through an assurance program where all Scholar risk assessments are reviewed to ascertain if they are fit for purpose. The Contractor will manage scholar incidents in conjunction with Home and Host universities, DFAT and emergency services. The Contractor will work with Home University ILOs if and where required.

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1. NCP funding commitment

Funding for the NCP supports:

- a. a Scholarship program for up to 19 months of study, language training, internships and/or mentorships, and
- b. a Mobility program for shorter periods of study (up to semester length), language training, internships, mentorships and research. See NCP Mobility Guidelines for further detail on this program.

Detailed information regarding scholarship benefits is in Section 5.8.

3.2. Scholarship Grant period

The term of an Applicant's proposed Scholarship program must:

- a. have a duration between three and 19 months, and
- b. commence on or between 1 January 2023 and 15 December 2023; unless otherwise approved by DFAT.

4. Eligibility requirements

DFAT will only consider Applications that satisfy all Eligibility requirements.

4.1. Who is eligible to apply for a Scholarship?

To be eligible for a Scholarship, and to remain eligible during their Scholarship program, an Applicant must:

- a. be nominated for the NCP Scholarship Program by their Home university (see Section 4.2)
- b. be an Australian citizen
- c. not be a current citizen or permanent resident of their proposed host location(s)
- d. be enrolled in and undertaking, until completion of all study components of the NCP Scholarship Program, at least one Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree at an Australian campus of an Australian university. (If a Scholar concludes their home degree requirements upon the completion of the mandatory study component of their NCP Scholarship Program, they may apply to DFAT for approval to continue to undertake any remaining component(s) of their NCP Scholarship Program. This will be considered on a case by case basis.)
- e. be between 18 and 30 years of age (inclusive) for non-Indigenous applicants, or between 18 and 35 years of age (inclusive) for Indigenous applicants, on 1 January 2023
- f. 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
- g. not be a previous recipient of an NCP Scholarship, and
- h. not be an employee of the branch of DFAT that administers the NCP

Scholars must continue to meet these Eligibility requirements during the term of their Scholarship

Unless otherwise approved by DFAT, Scholars may not commence another offshore scholarship or mobility grant while undertaking their Scholarship program.

4.2. Nominations

Only students nominated by their Home university can apply for a Scholarship. Students interested in applying for a Scholarship should contact the NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships or the international office of their Home university.

Each Australian university may nominate up to ten students enrolled at that university, without ranking them. Each Australian university determines its own process for selecting nominees but should consider the Eligibility requirements and Assessment criteria.

DFAT strongly encourages Australian universities to ensure their nominees are representative of the diversity of the Australian undergraduate population. DFAT will consider reasonable accommodation to facilitate participation of undergraduates living with disability.

Australian universities must submit nominations online through the NCP Online system. DFAT will provide the Australian university NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships with instructions to access the online platform and submit nominations.

Eligible nominated students will be invited to submit an application. Applicants should be aware that the following details will be requested from their Home university in the online nomination:

- a. name

- b. gender
- c. date of birth
- d. email address
- e. mobile phone
- f. degree in which the nominee is enrolled
- g. academic transcript (official)
- h. intended primary location, and
- i. confirmation that the nominated student consents to a police check being arranged by the Contractor.

Each participating Australian university is responsible for ensuring that it has appropriate policies in place relating to handling of personal information and has obtained each applicant's express consent to deal with and provide their personal information to DFAT.

Each Applicant is required to agree to the terms of use of such personal information (Section 13.4) when submitting their Application.

The Contractor will arrange for a police check for each Applicant. The Australian Government expects NCP Scholars to enhance the reputation of Australia and the NCP whilst overseas. An adverse finding will not automatically disqualify an Applicant from receiving a Scholarship. However, if a successful Applicant is found to have a criminal record or conviction, including one that was not disclosed prior to the offer being made, DFAT may revoke or decline to offer a Scholarship to the Applicant.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1. Eligible Scholarship program activities

To be eligible, an Applicant's proposed Scholarship program must (unless otherwise approved by DFAT):

- a. include at least one Study component commencing within three months of the Scholarship program commencement date. All Study components must be confirmed by the Host institution prior to Program commencement
- b. be for a Scholarship term:
 - i. of between three and 19 months in duration, and
 - ii. commence on or between 1 January 2023 and 15 December 2023, and
- c. at all times during the Scholarship term, involve the Scholar undertaking either:
 - i. a Study component
 - ii. a full-time Internship component
 - iii. full-time Language training, or
 - iv. a Permitted gap.

In addition, Scholarship programs may include:

- a. an Internship component (see Section 5.3) undertaken concurrently with a Study component or Language training

- b. a Mentorship (see Section 5.3) undertaken concurrently with a Study component, full-time Internship component or full-time Language training, or
- c. Language training (see Section 5.4) undertaken concurrently with a Study component or Internship component.

5.2. Study component

5.2.1. General

To satisfy the mandatory study component of a Scholarship program, a course of study must:

- a. be at least one full-time study 'period', which is either a semester or trimester as defined by the host institution
- b. except via a research-based honours program, be undertaken through attendance at face-to-face course delivery, on the Host institution premises or such other physical premises that the Host institution has approved for delivery of the teaching component of the course (and not via online, pre-recorded or other remote technology)
- c. be a course undertaken at the host institution, for which the applicant's home university has agreed to grant full-time academic credit towards a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree. Courses that provide whole or partial credit towards a concurrent Diploma (in addition to full-time academic credit towards a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree) are also permitted, and
- d. for scholars studying a research-based honours program, be supervised by an academic from their host institution (and scholars should in their application describe the benefits of undertaking their research program at their proposed host location).

Scholarship programs may include up to one academic year of Study components. Each study period as part of the academic year is regarded as a separate Study component.

When there is a period between the end of one Study component and the commencement of the next Study component, and a Scholar is not undertaking a full-time Internship or full-time Language training, the Scholar must apply (and have obtained approval) for a Permitted gap covering that period.

5.2.2. Host institution

Study components must not be undertaken at an offshore campus of an Australian university or a university established or headquartered outside the Host location. In exceptional circumstances, DFAT may waive this requirement where the Scholar is able to establish that there is a demonstrated benefit to the overall NCP Scholarship Program.

5.3. Internship and mentorship

DFAT strongly encourages Applicants to include one or more Internships or Mentorships in their proposed Scholarship program, where Host location visa requirements permit.

Internships and Mentorships do not need to be confirmed at the time of Application.

Scholars will be able to access the NCP Internship and Mentorship Network to identify Internship and Mentorship opportunities. Internships and Mentorships do not have to be arranged through the network. Prospective Internship or Mentorship placements, and Host organisations that a Scholar includes in their proposed Scholarship program are subject to due diligence and a risk review to ensure alignment with relevant DFAT policies.

5.3.1. Internship component

Internships enable scholars to have immersive work experiences relevant to their academic course and professional development. Internships can include (but are not limited to) clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies.

An Internship component as part of an NCP Scholarship program must be undertaken:

- a. on a full-time basis (between 22 and 38 hours per week) prior or subsequent to a Study component (subject to Section 5.1(a)) (The minimum duration of any full-time Internship placement is one week. The total cumulative duration of all full-time Internships undertaken during a Scholarship program must not exceed six months), or
- b. on a part-time basis, concurrent with a Study component or a full-time Language training component (there is no maximum duration), and
- c. in the Primary location, or in a Secondary location, in accordance with Section 5.5.

Unless otherwise approved by DFAT, an internship must be undertaken face-to-face at the premises of the host organisation, or elsewhere in the host location where the host organisation conducts regular business. An internship may not be undertaken online or remotely.

An Internship may be paid or unpaid. An internship must not incur any cost to the scholar, their Home university or their Host university, such as for training, program materials or delivery or staff wages. Attending informal or formal paid courses does not count as an Internship.

A scholar who is currently employed with an organisation must not undertake an internship with that organisation as part of their NCP program (whether the internship is paid or unpaid).

5.3.2. Mentorship

A Mentorship is a developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person guides a less experienced or less knowledgeable person, relevant to work, career, or professional development. Mentorships may only be undertaken concurrently with a Study component, full-time Internship component, or full-time Language training.

A Mentorship is negotiated between the Scholar and mentor and can be undertaken face-to-face or via remote methods. There is no minimum time commitment for a Mentorship.

5.4. Language training

DFAT strongly encourages scholars to undertake language training as part of their NCP scholarship program. Language training as part of a scholarship program must be:

- a. undertaken in the same Host location as a study component or a full-time Internship component
- b. in an official language of the Host location where it is undertaken (other than English)
- c. delivered formally and face-to-face by a bona fide training provider (as assessed by DFAT in its sole and absolute discretion) and
- d. for a period of up to six months, undertaken either:
 - i. full-time, which means for a minimum of 15 contact hours per week. (The minimum duration of any full-time Language training is one week. The total cumulative duration of all full time Language training undertaken during the program must not exceed six months), or
 - ii. part-time, concurrently with a Study component or a full-time Internship component (there is no maximum duration).

5.5. Eligible locations

5.5.1. Host locations

Scholarship programs must be conducted only in the following host locations:

Bangladesh	French Polynesia	Maldives	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Bhutan	Hong Kong	Marshall Islands	Palau	Taiwan
Brunei Darussalam	India	Mongolia	Papua New Guinea	Thailand
Cambodia	Indonesia	Myanmar	Philippines	Timor-Leste
China	Japan	Nauru	Republic of Korea	Tonga
Cook Islands	Kiribati	Nepal	Samoa	Tuvalu
Federated States of Micronesia	Laos	New Caledonia	Singapore	Vanuatu
Fiji	Malaysia	Niue	Solomon Islands	Vietnam

5.5.2. Primary location

A Primary location is the Host location for which the Scholarship is awarded. The most substantial Study component and the majority of the duration of the Scholarship program must be completed in the Primary location.

5.5.3. Secondary locations

A Scholar may undertake their Scholarship program in more than one Host location (other than the Primary location) and/or at more than one Host institution or Host organisation. Where an Applicant proposes to undertake a Scholarship program in more than one Host location, the Applicant must outline in their Application the rationale for including the Secondary location/s in the Scholarship program.

If a Scholar undertakes Scholarship program components at a Secondary location, the total time spent at all Secondary locations combined must not exceed the total time spent at the primary location.

Inclusion of a Secondary location in an NCP scholarship program does not entitle a Scholar to additional Travel allowance or Establishment allowance (see Section 5.8.3).

5.5.4. Travel requirements

Scholars are responsible for making their own travel arrangements, including obtaining and complying with appropriate visas for each host location in which the scholar will undertake their scholarship program. Applicants must carefully consider the risks of travel to the proposed Host locations and regions before deciding whether to apply. Scholars must make their own independent enquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel and to the Host location(s), and ensure they are fully informed about the risks at all times.

If a Scholar has difficulty arranging a visa for their Host location(s), the Scholar should ask their Case manager for advice on obtaining visas for those locations, based on past scholars' experiences. Scholars must obtain travel medical advice, including any necessary vaccinations, prior to commencing travel.

Scholars must not travel to a Host location or region within a Host location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller advice recommends 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' (see www.smartraveller.gov.au). Where the Smartraveller advice is raised to 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' for a Host location during the application process or while a

Scholar is on program, the Scholar's Case manager will work with the Scholar to identify an alternative Host location if required.

Scholars are required to acknowledge in their Scholarship agreement (see Section 10.1) that they have considered the risks carefully and investigated safety precautions before deciding to travel to any host location. Scholars must work with their Home university to address the issues identified in the risk assessment for Host locations undertaken in Section 2.5.

5.6. Permitted gaps

During the Scholarship term, gaps may be approved on the terms set out in the Scholarship agreement during which the Scholar is not required to undertake the Scholarship program on a full-time basis in accordance with Section 5.1(c).

A permitted gap must not result in the Scholarship term exceeding 19 months; or include any additional costs to the NCP Scholarship Program, the Contractor, the Host institution(s), the Host organisation(s) (if any) or Language training provider (if any).

A permitted gap may impact on a Scholar's entitlement to Insurance under the relevant policy terms. Scholars are responsible for informing themselves of the insurance policy terms and taking out any appropriate alternative or additional insurance cover where the insurance is impacted by a permitted gap.

A permitted gap is:

- a. **Gap leave** - when there is a gap between the end of and subsequent commencement of a Study component(s), full-time Language training or Internship component(s) and is for a maximum of:
 - i. in the first 12 month period of a Scholarship program, four weeks, and
 - ii. in any subsequent period of a Scholarship program, up to two weeks (in addition to any unused gap leave under Section 5.6(a)(i)).

Gap leave is calculated in calendar days between full-time components.

When applying for gap leave, Scholars must demonstrate it is reasonably necessary in order to complete their Scholarship program, with no reasonable alternatives. Scholars must apply for gap leave as soon as possible on becoming aware of the requirement for gap leave. Scholars must remain in one of the eligible Host locations during any period of gap leave.

Except in relation to the insurance, Scholarship benefits are unaffected by approved gap leave.

- b. **Leave of absence** - for a maximum of:
 - i. two weeks in the first 12-month period of a NCP Scholarship program, and
 - ii. one week in any subsequent period of an NCP Scholarship program (in addition to any unused leave of absence under Section 5.6ai).

Leave of absence is calculated in calendar days between full-time components.

A leave of absence may be for personal or professional development, compassionate and compelling reasons, or for issues relating to the Scholar's safety and security.

Except in relation to the insurance, scholarship benefits are unaffected by approved a leave of absence.

- c. **Suspension** - a suspension may be applied for on the terms set out in the NCP Scholarship agreement, including where a Scholar has exhausted their entitlement to apply for a

permitted gap. DFAT may also require a suspension in accordance with the processes set out in the Scholarship agreement.

During any period of suspension there is no entitlement to, or payment of, NCP Scholarship benefits or payments for costs incurred during the suspension.

5.7. Community engagement and advocacy

The Australian Government, including through its overseas network of diplomatic missions and offices, may invite Scholars to participate in events during their NCP Scholarship, in addition to the formal requirements of the Scholarship program.

Scholars are strongly encouraged to share their experiences of their Scholarship program with the NCP Secretariat, other students and their community, including through engaging with the NCP alumni community and through appropriate use of social media. They are strongly encouraged to participate in activities that promote the NCP, and to advocate for the NCP, including the benefits of studying and undertaking work placements in the Indo-Pacific.

5.8. Scholarship benefits

5.8.1. Overview

Scholars are responsible for their own financial circumstances while undertaking their NCP Scholarship program. Before applying for a Scholarship, an applicant must consider their personal circumstances and ensure that undertaking a Scholarship program will not overextend them financially. In particular, Applicants should be aware that exchange rates can fluctuate.

Scholars may receive the Scholarship benefits described in Sections 5.8.2, 5.8.3 and 5.8.4 during the Scholarship term, depending on their Scholarship program and whether they continue to meet the requirements for each Scholarship benefit in the Scholarship agreement.

The terms on which Scholars will receive Scholarship benefits are set out in the Scholarship agreement. In most cases, Scholarship benefits are paid as a reimbursement to the Scholar or directly to the Host institution, Host organisation, Language training provider or relevant third party, and not to the Scholar in advance. Any Scholarship benefits received must only be used for the purpose of the Scholarship program.

All amounts set out in this Section 5.8 or the Scholarship agreement are expressed in Australian dollars. Where amounts are converted into foreign currency (including where an invoice is paid on behalf of the Scholar, or the Scholar's eligibility for a reimbursement needs to be determined), the then current exchange rate will be applied, as determined by DFAT.

Not all expenditure during an NCP Scholarship program is eligible for grant funding. The DFAT program delegate makes the final decision on what constitutes eligible expenditure and may provide guidance if required.

5.8.2. Tuition fees

Tuition fees are payable directly to the relevant Host institution and any Language training provider, up to the maximum amount for each activity set out in the following table. A Scholar is responsible for any tuition fees in excess of the maximum amount per activity.

Item	Activity	Length of activity	Expenses payable under the Tuition fees	Maximum amount of expenses payable as Tuition fees for the activity
1	Study component	Any period up to a maximum of two semesters or three trimesters (as defined by the Host institution)	<p>1. Course fees at the Host institution where the Scholar is a fee-paying international student.</p> <p>The tuition fees only cover course fees at the Host institution if no current exchange agreement relevant to the Scholar's field of study is available between the Home university and the Host institution. The Scholar's entitlement to payment of course fees is considered and approved as part of the initial acceptance of applications. Any requested changes after Applications have been submitted are subject to consideration and approval on a case by case basis as a variation request under the Scholarship agreement, in accordance with the process in Section 10.2.</p> <p>2. Applicable student services and amenities fees at the Host institution.</p> <p>3. Other amounts payable to the Host institution where all of the following requirements are met:</p> <p>(a) the total of the costs is more than \$200</p> <p>(b) the costs are not covered under an applicable exchange agreement place</p> <p>(c) the Host institution certifies in writing that the costs are mandatory for completion of the Study component, and</p> <p>(d) an invoice for the relevant amount is issued by the Host institution.</p> <p>Examples of this cost may include compulsory course field trips within the host location; fieldwork research costs (Honours); compulsory materials or equipment (e.g. safety or personal protective equipment)</p>	Up to \$10,000 per semester or \$6,666 per trimester

Item	Activity	Length of activity	Expenses payable under the Tuition fees	Maximum amount of expenses payable as Tuition fees for the activity
2	Full-time Language training (more than one month, to a maximum of six months)	More than one month in total to a maximum of six months Full time Language training may be undertaken in blocks, provided that the total cumulative duration does not exceed six months	Fees for the Language training payable to the Language training provider	Up to \$10,000
3	Full-time Language training (one month or less)	Up to or equal to one month duration in total Full time Language training may be undertaken in blocks, provided that the total cumulative duration does not exceed one month	Fees for the Language training payable to the Language training provider	Up to \$1,500, minus any amount paid under item 4.
4	Part-time Language training	Any period	Fees for the Language training payable to the Language training provider	Up to \$1,500, minus any amount paid under item 3.

The maximum amount that a Scholar will be paid as tuition fees for activities undertaken during an NCP scholarship program is \$20,000 ('Tuition fees cap'). Once the Tuition fees cap is reached, the scholar will be responsible for the balance of any outstanding Tuition fees.

5.8.3. Allowances

- a. **A one-off Travel allowance** of \$2,500 paid to a Scholar (\$1,250 paid prior to travel to the Host location and \$1,250 paid upon return to Australia at the end of the Scholarship term) to contribute to costs associated with the Scholar's eligible travel to and from the Host location.
- b. **A one-off Establishment allowance** of \$2,500 paid to a Scholar to contribute to the costs associated with the Scholar settling in at their Host location. Fellows (see Section 6.3) will receive an additional payment of \$1,000 ('Fellow allowance') to purchase study materials for use during their Scholarship and to contribute to costs associated with the Fellow's promotion of the NCP. Scholars that are appointed as Fellow under more than one applicable award will receive a Fellow allowance of \$1,000 for each position.
- c. **A Scholarship allowance** of up to \$2,500 paid to a Scholar as a monthly stipend during the Scholarship term to contribute to the Scholar's basic living costs in their Host location.
- d. **A Mental health allowance** of \$1,000 reimbursed to a Scholar to contribute to the cost of any mental health services, including professional services (such as by qualified/registered psychologists and social workers to assist with personal issues, such as coping with life changes and fostering mental wellbeing).

5.8.4. Other scholarship benefits

Scholars also receive:

5.8.4.1 Insurance

Health and travel insurance while outside Australia, are provided under an existing policy of cover and are subject to certain terms and exclusions. On a case-by-case basis, a scholar may also be considered for, and if approved by DFAT, may receive, additional insurance cover for an existing condition that is not typically covered by the standard terms of insurance.

5.8.4.2 Allocation of Case manager

A dedicated Case manager from the Contractor is assigned to the Scholar for the duration of their scholarship term and provides services including pre-departure briefings, advice on health and travel insurance, advice and assistance relating to accommodation, and payment of Scholarship benefits.

5.8.4.3 Private sector sponsorship

Scholarships may also be sponsored by private sector organisations. All Scholars are eligible and will be considered for private sector sponsorship, which offers benefits in addition to the NCP Scholarship.

DFAT has entered into sponsorship agreements with private sector organisations for the provision of in-kind benefits to the NCP. Sponsors are able to associate their brand with the NCP such as through the NCP (Business Name) Scholarship for (Location). This is considered a 'Sponsored scholarship'. Benefits may be directed to Scholars, including enhanced Internship packages, training opportunities (such as leadership training) and other benefits. Agreements will be put in place regarding Scholar benefits and obligations under a Sponsored scholarship.

Sponsors provide DFAT with a set of criteria which DFAT uses to award Sponsored scholarships. Criteria may include discipline, location, Host institution/Home university, or other relevant factors.

For example, a Sponsored scholarship may be awarded to the top-ranked business student studying in Singapore.

Following the selection process set out in Section 8, DFAT will prepare a shortlist of scholars who meet the criteria for each sponsored scholarship. With the consent of the shortlisted scholar, DFAT will provide the scholar's details to the relevant sponsor. Sponsors will contact scholars directly and determine who will be awarded the sponsored scholarship.

Scholars offered a sponsored scholarship must negotiate directly with the sponsor on the timing of any additional benefits such as training opportunities.

6. The assessment criteria

6.1. Assessment criteria

In addition to meeting the Eligibility requirements, Applicants will be assessed in accordance with the process set out in Section 8 and against the following Assessment Criteria (for both the written Application and at interview). Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview.

6.1.1. Academic excellence at the tertiary level (25 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated higher-order cognitive skills, creativity, innovation, communication skills, problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills in their university study. Applicants may also draw on academic achievements such as academic awards and commendations, publications, or other examples of academic excellence at the tertiary level. *(Maximum 300 words.)*

High school academic achievements will not be considered.

6.1.2. Leadership and engagement in the community (25 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated leadership in the community, including in volunteer and not-for-profit roles, employment and/or other activities they have undertaken locally, nationally, overseas and/or at their university. Applicants should provide an example of a leadership role they have undertaken. *(Maximum 300 words.)*

6.1.3. Adaptability and resilience (25 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated ability to adapt to change and thrive in a different environment, and their resilience in the face of challenges. *(Maximum 300 words.)*

6.1.4. Ability to contribute to NCP's strategic objective and outcomes (25 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated understanding of the Strategic objective and Outcomes of the NCP program, and how the Applicant and their proposed Scholarship program would contribute to the NCP Strategic objective and Outcomes, including on return to Australia. *(Maximum 300 words.)*

6.2. Other considerations

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

- a. Applicants proposing:
 - i. longer periods of Study components
 - ii. an Internship component or a Mentorship

- iii. a period (or longer periods) of Language training, and/or
- iv. a Scholarship program with coherent correlation across the proposed Study component, Language training and Internship component
- b. achieving diversity of placement across Host locations
- c. representation from diverse student groups including but not limited to, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, students from a low socio-economic status background, students from regional/remote areas or universities, students who are first in their immediate family to attend university, students across the genders, female students studying in non-traditional fields, students with a disability, and students from a non-English speaking background
- d. diversity across fields of study and Australian universities
- e. how the proposal contributes to value with relevant money.

6.3. Selection of Fellows

Fellows are NCP Scholars who are encouraged to play a strong leadership role in promoting the NCP while on their scholarship program and as part of the alumni network following completion of their Scholarship.

Selection panels will nominate, from amongst highly-ranked applicants, to be NCP Fellows:

- a. one Fellow for each host location
- b. one Indigenous fellow
- c. one ASEAN fellow whose proposed program will be conducted in an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) host location and most closely aligns with promoting close cooperation with ASEAN

DFAT's program delegate decides which candidates are offered a fellowship. DFAT may establish further categories of fellows at its discretion.

7. How to apply

Before applying, each Applicant must read these Guidelines and the sample Scholarship agreement which can be found at [GrantConnect](#). Any alterations or addenda¹ will be published on GrantConnect. By registering on GrantConnect, individuals will be notified automatically of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for Australian Government grants information.

7.1. Overview

DFAT or the Contractor will contact individuals nominated by Australian universities by email and provide instructions on how to submit an Application.

Each Applicant must:

- a. complete the online application form available from a link provided to the applicant by DFAT, accessible via <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>
- b. provide all information requested

¹ Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents.

- c. address all Eligibility requirements and Assessment criteria
- d. include all necessary attachments, and
- e. submit their Application online through <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/> by the closing time.

An Applicant may only submit one Scholarship program proposal. An Applicant cannot change their Primary location in their Application once it has been submitted.

Each Applicant is responsible for ensuring their Application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code 1995* (Cth). Applications may be excluded from consideration, offers revoked or a Scholarship terminated if DFAT reasonably believes that false or misleading information has formed a component of an application. Further terms relating to the termination or cancellation of a Scholarship are set out in the Scholarship agreement.

If an Applicant finds an error in their Application after submitting it, they should contact DFAT immediately via email at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au. DFAT does not have to accept any additional information and DFAT will not accept requests to correct an Application after the closing time.

Each applicant should keep a copy of their Application and any supporting documents.

DFAT will acknowledge receipt of a submitted Application via an automatically generated email.

7.2. Written applications

Applicants must provide written responses to the Assessment criteria. An Applicant must also outline their proposed Scholarship program, including the mandatory Study component, any proposed Internships, Mentorships and Language training, and the Host location(s) in which they intend to undertake each component of their Scholarship. Applicants must nominate a Primary host location in their application.

7.3. Referee reports

Applicants must submit two referee reports with their Application, with at least one report from an academic referee.

Each referee must:

- a. comment substantively on the Applicant's abilities and experience relevant to the Assessment criteria, and
- b. hold a position that gives their comments credibility (for example, a position in the Applicant's Home university, workplace or community).

7.4. Attachments to the application

Applicants must also submit the following documentation:

- a. evidence of Australian citizenship (e.g. current Australian passport biopage or Australian citizenship certificate)
- b. a letter of current enrolment from their Home university, including expected completion date for the course towards which the overseas study program will be credited
- c. a current, complete-to-date official academic transcript from their Home university

- d. evidence of affiliation with their proposed Host institution if applicable, and evidence that the Applicant or their Home university has made contact with the Host institution in relation to the proposed Study component:
 - i. if intending to apply for an exchange place for the Study component under an agreement between the Applicant's Home university and the Host institution:
 - (1) a copy of an exchange agreement between the Applicant's Home university and the Host institution, or a letter from the Applicant's Home university outlining partnership arrangements to allow for commencement on or between 1 January 2023 and 15 December 2023, and
 - (2) an email or letter from the Applicant or the Applicant's Home university to the Host institution indicating the student is in the process of applying for the NCP Scholarship Program and, if successful, would be seeking to undertake a study program at that Host institution under the relevant exchange place arrangement for commencement on or between 1 January 2023 and 15 December 2023, or
 - i. if intending to apply for a fee-paying place for the Study component:
 - (1) confirmation from the Home university that no current exchange agreement is in place between the Home university and the Host institution (as described in item 1 of the table at Section 5.8.2), and
 - (2) an email or letter from the Applicant or the Applicant's Home university to the Host institution indicating the student is in the process of applying for the NCP Scholarship Program and, if successful, would be seeking to undertake a study program at that Host Institution as a fee-paying student for commencement on or between 1 January 2023 and 15 December 2023
- e. a letter from the Applicant's Home university faculty, endorsed by the Home university's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships, attesting to the feasibility of the Applicant's proposed Study component, with reference to the requirements set out in Section 5.2.1.
- f. a current CV outlining the Applicant's work experience, community engagement activities (including, for example, volunteering, memberships, mentoring) and extra-curricular interests.

Applicants must liaise with their Home university's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships or international office to obtain this evidence.

Applicants should only attach requested documents. Information that has not been requested will not be considered.

7.5. Timing of grant opportunity processes

The list below summaries the indicative key dates and steps in the selection process. DFAT may amend the timeframe at any time by posting a notice on GrantConnect.

Expected timing for this grant opportunity

- a. Guidelines published on GrantConnect (<https://www.grants.gov.au>): **28 March 2022**
- b. Australian universities nominate students. Nominations must be made via <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>: **22 June 2022 – 19 July 2022 (four weeks)**
- c. Nominations close at 11.30pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST): **19 July 2022**

- d. Nominated students receive an invitation to complete an online application. Applicants complete and submit their application and supporting documentation: **20 July 2022 – 16 August 2022 (four weeks)**
- e. Applications close at 11.30pm AEST ('Closing Time'): **16 August 2022**
- f. Applications are shortlisted. Shortlisted Applicants are notified: **September 2022**
- g. Shortlisted Applicants are interviewed: **September – October 2022**
- h. Selections are finalised. Minister for Foreign Affairs notified of selection outcomes. All successful and unsuccessful applicants are notified of the outcome of their application: **November 2022**
- i. Scholars are announced and their details published on the NCP website: **November - December 2022**
- j. Scholars commence their scholarship: **1 January 2023 – 15 December 2023**

7.6. Questions during the application process

Please direct any questions during the application period to the NCP Secretariat at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au. The NCP Secretariat will respond to questions within three working days. If applicable, answers to questions will be posted on GrantConnect.

The NCP Secretariat will not respond to questions received after **2 August 2022**.

8. The grant selection process

8.1. Assessment of applications

DFAT will only accept and consider Applications submitted by the Closing Time. DFAT assesses applications as follows:

Stage 1: Eligibility screening

Only Applications that meet all Eligibility requirements will be assessed in Stage 2.

Stage 2: Assessment of written applications against assessment criteria

Eligible Applications are assessed through a competitive process by a panel of assessors who are experienced in assessing Commonwealth grant applications or similar processes managed by Commonwealth departments. DFAT and/or the Contractor may comprise the panel of assessors. All panel members are subject to the CGRGs.

Each eligible Application is assessed against the Assessment criteria and against other applications. The merits of each Application are considered based on:

- a. how well it addresses the Assessment criteria, and
- b. how it compares to other Applications.

The assessors provide an order of merit to DFAT. The NCP Secretariat determines which applications are shortlisted for interview on the basis of the order of merit proposed by the assessment panel and other considerations outlined in Section 6.2.

Stage 3: Interviews

DFAT or the Contractor invites shortlisted Applicants to attend an interview in accordance with the timetable in Section 7.5.

Members of interview panels have relevant expertise and are drawn from: senior government officials, private sector representatives, experts on Indo-Pacific affairs and international education specialists.

Panels rate each Applicant on the basis of the Assessment criteria and other considerations outlined in Section 6.2.

8.2. Who will approve the award of scholarships?

The NCP Secretariat moderates the interview panel recommendations and presents the findings to the program delegate (DFAT First Assistant Secretary responsible for the NCP) who decides the Applicants to be awarded a Scholarship, taking into account recommendations of the interview panels and the availability of NCP program funds.

The program delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- a. approval of the Scholarship
- b. grant funding amount to be awarded, and
- c. terms and conditions of the Scholarship.

There is no appeal mechanism for the delegate's decision to award or not award a Scholarship.

DFAT will advise the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the outcome of the round.

9. Notification of application outcomes

DFAT or the Contractor will advise Applicants of the outcome of their Application via email. DFAT will advise successful Applicants of any specific conditions attached to the Scholarship. DFAT will also advise Home universities of the successful Applicants from their university.

9.1. Feedback on applications

Individual feedback will not be provided to unsuccessful Applicants. After the conclusion of the round, DFAT will publish advice to Applicants on the NCP website. This includes advice on what makes a strong application and the main reasons applications were unsuccessful.

Unsuccessful Applicants may apply for any future grant opportunities under the NCP. Any subsequent Application will be assessed on its merits, based on the guidelines in place at the time.

9.2. Offer and acceptance processes

Each offer of a Scholarship is subject to the Applicant accepting and signing a Scholarship agreement and being able to obtain appropriate visa(s) for their Host location(s).

10. Successful grant applications

10.1. Scholarship agreement

A Scholar must enter into a legally binding Scholarship agreement with the Commonwealth before Scholarship benefits can be paid to the Scholar or a third party and before the Scholar commences the Scholarship program.

Applicants should read the sample Scholarship agreement before submitting their Application. The Australian Government will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Scholar or a third party in relation to a Scholarship program before a Scholarship agreement is entered into.

The Scholarship agreement will detail the Scholar's responsibilities in relation to the Scholarship program and the Scholarship benefits payable by the Australian Government. The Scholarship agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the program delegate. DFAT will identify these in the Scholarship agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the Scholarship agreement.

The version of the Guidelines in place at the closing date/time of this round will apply to the Scholarship program.

10.2. Variations to scholarship programs

After an offer is accepted, Scholars may apply to vary their Scholarship program to:

- a. incorporate a new Internship or Mentorship
- b. increase the duration of the Study component(s), Language training or Internship component, or
- c. change any other aspect of their Scholarship program where exceptional circumstances prevent them from completing the Scholarship program as initially proposed.

Any request for a variation must be made on a program variation request form provided by the Case manager, at least one month in advance of the proposed variation commencing, or such shorter period as required by the circumstances.

The decision to approve a variation to a Scholarship program will be made on a case-by-case basis by DFAT or the Contractor, in its sole and absolute discretion. Without limitation, DFAT or the Contractor, as the case may be, may consider:

- a. the merits of the request (and funding being available, if required) in respect of achieving the NCP Strategic objective and Outcomes
- b. demonstrated coherence across the Study components, and any Language training and Internship components of the NCP Scholarship Program, and
- c. ensuring that the Scholarship program remains consistent with the Eligibility requirements.

Scholars are liable for any financial commitments made by them in relation to their proposed change of Scholarship program where those commitments are made before receiving formal advice granting the Scholarship program variation.

10.3. Specific legislation and policies

Scholars must comply with all relevant Australian, as well as, the local laws and regulations of their Host locations, while in Australia and in host locations on Scholarship. This includes compliance with laws in relation to child protection and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

DFAT does not tolerate exploitation, abuse or harassment. This applies within DFAT and extends to those we work with. NCP scholars must read and adhere to DFAT's Child Protection Policy and Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy, which set out expectations in relation to appropriate behaviours and reporting requirements. DFAT takes all allegations and reported incidents of exploitation, abuse and harassment seriously. NCP scholars also have an obligation to comply with their university's policies on child protection and PSEAH.

Scholars should take into account the Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector.

10.4. How DFAT pays the grant

The Scholarship agreement sets when and how Scholarship benefits will be provided to Scholars. Some Scholarship benefits will be paid directly to the Scholar. Other Scholarship benefits, such as tuition fees, will be paid directly to the Host institution or Language training provider, as relevant. Applicants should refer to the sample Scholarship agreement for further information.

10.5. Taxation

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. DFAT recommends Scholars seek independent professional advice on their taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). DFAT does not provide advice on particular taxation circumstances.

11. Announcement of grants

DFAT may publicise details of individual Scholarships and Scholars including, but not limited to:

- a. names of successful Scholars, their Home university, Host location(s), Host institution, Host organisation and Language training provider
- b. description of Scholarship programs being supported (including timing)
- c. the amount of funding awarded, and
- d. photographs of Scholars, both provided by Scholars or taken at DFAT and other events

12. How DFAT monitors grant activity

Requirements and expectations for monitoring a Scholar's Scholarship program are set out in the Scholarship agreement.

12.1. Keeping DFAT informed

Scholars must inform DFAT or the Contractor if anything is likely to affect their ability to undertake their Scholarship program, in accordance with the Scholarship agreement.

12.2. Reporting

Scholars must report in accordance with the Scholarship agreement.

12.3. Evaluation

The Australian Government reports on and evaluates the NCP Scholarship Program. DFAT and the Contractor may use information about scholars and their Scholarship program, Home university, Host institution, Host organisation and Language training provider for performance monitoring and management of the NCP, and to evaluate how effective the program is in achieving the NCP Strategic Objective and Outcomes. DFAT may also draw on information to create testimonials for NCP promotion.

DFAT and the Contractor will monitor performance and manage scholarships through [NCPOnline](#). Information about applicants, program outcomes and performance will also be collected.

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

NCP scholar alumni are expected to participate in surveys and other program monitoring and evaluation activities after completion of their scholarship program, as required by DFAT.

13. Probity

The Australian Government will ensure the grant opportunity process is fair, in accordance with the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

The Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme provides the public with visibility of the nature, level and extent of foreign influence on Australia's government and politics. It is recommended that you review obligations and responsibilities under the scheme at [Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme | Attorney-General's Department \(ag.gov.au\)](#).

DFAT may change these Guidelines from time to time. When this happens, the revised Guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

13.1. Enquiries and feedback

Section 9.1 provides information about feedback on Applications.

Enquiries and feedback about decisions for this scholarship opportunity should be sent to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

If an Applicant, or any other person, does not agree with the way DFAT has handled their feedback/complaint, they can refer the matter to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with DFAT.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

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.

13.2. Conflicts of interest

Any conflict of interest could affect the performance of the NCP Program or an NCP Scholarship. An Australian university that makes a nomination must disclose any conflict of interest in relation to a nomination in writing to ncp.secretariat@dfat.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 such steps as reasonably required by DFAT to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest.

Applicants must disclose any conflict of interest in relation to an Application in writing to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au at the time of submitting the Application or when the conflict of interest arises or is likely to arise. Applicants must take such steps as DFAT reasonably requires to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest for Australian government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct (section 13(7)) of the *Public Service Act 1999*. Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

13.3. Privacy

DFAT and its contractors are bound by the provisions of the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Privacy Act), including the Australian Privacy Principles which prescribe rules for handling personal information.

DFAT and its contractors collect personal information, including from home universities and other third parties, in relation to applications under the NCP. Types of personal information collected include personal details (name, gender, date of birth and contact details), academic results and equity information.

Personal information will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which it was collected, or otherwise in accordance with the Privacy Act. DFAT and its contractors collect personal information for the purpose of administering the NCP, including the following purposes:

- a. assessing Applications,
- b. administering and performance monitoring of the NCP,
- c. promoting the NCP, including to Scholarship recipients and to media representatives and in promotional material, information and publications in hardcopy and/or on the internet, and
- d. inviting NCP Scholars and alumni to relevant functions and events held in Australia and overseas.

In accordance with the Privacy Act, information collected for a primary purpose may sometimes be used or disclosed for a related secondary purpose. For example, DFAT may disclose personal information in relation to applications under the NCP Scholarship Program to:

- a. other Australian Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Education, Skills and Employment,
- b. State and Territory Governments,
- c. Australian Parliamentary members and committees of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia,
- d. contractors and agents of DFAT,
- e. Australian universities, including to the NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships,
- f. potential Internship/Mentorship Host Organisations, Language Training Providers, Host Location governments/authorities or non-government organisations. These may be foreign organisations (noting that they may not be bound by Australian privacy legislation or equivalent privacy legislation in their own countries);
- g. Scholarship sponsors, including but not limited to companies or professional bodies, and
- h. media representatives, including foreign media representatives.

DFAT may also disclose personal information in relation to applications under the NCP Scholarship Program to overseas recipients in accordance with the Privacy Act. This may include host institutions, potential internship/mentorship host organisations, language training providers, host location governments/authorities and non-government organisations.

If an Applicant does not consent to DFAT or its contractor(s) collecting, using and disclosing their personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act, DFAT may not be able to process their Application.

DFAT's [Privacy Policy](#) contains information about DFAT's collection, use, disclosure and storage of personal information, including sensitive information, and how individuals may access and correct personal information that we hold.

13.4. Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, an Applicant or Scholar must agree not to disclose to any person, other than DFAT, any confidential information relating to the Application and/or Scholarship agreement, without DFAT's prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where the Applicant or Scholar is required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

DFAT may at any time, require the Applicant to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of DFAT's confidential information in a form DFAT considers acceptable.

DFAT will keep any information in connection with the Scholarship agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all three conditions below:

1. the Applicant/Scholar clearly identifies the information as confidential and explain why DFAT should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to the Applicant/Scholar or someone else.

DFAT will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the NCP Scholarship Program effectively
- employees and contractors of DFAT so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse DFAT programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- 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
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in NCP Scholarship Program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, or
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The Scholarship agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the Scholarship agreement.

13.5. Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (Cth) (FOI Act).

Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government, subject to exemptions.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: The Director, Freedom of Information and Privacy Law Section
Legal Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
R.G. Casey Building, John McEwen Crescent
BARTON ACT 0221

By email: foi@dfat.gov.au

14. Glossary

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which they live, or formerly lived

Academic transcript

an official document issued by the home university as a record of all completed units and results throughout the student's enrolment

Academic year

the annual period of study sessions of a home university and/or host institution

Administering entity

the entity responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes

Applicant

a person who is applying or has applied for an NCP Scholarship.

Application

an application for a scholarship under the NCP Scholarship Program

Assessment criteria

the principles or standards against which applications will be judged, as set out in Section 6

Australian Qualifications Framework

is available at: <https://www.aqf.edu.au/>.

Australian university

a registered higher education provider for the purposes of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (Cth) that is registered in an 'Australian university' category.

Bachelor Degree

bachelor Level 7 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Bachelor honours degree

undergraduate studies at Bachelor Honours Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework

Case manager

staff of the Contractor assigned to a scholar and responsible for providing that scholar with information and support to undertake their scholarship program

Closing date/time

the date and time beyond which applications will not be accepted, as specified in the Section 7.5

Commencement

the date in the application that the scholar is required to commence their scholarship program

Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)

establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.

Concurrent diploma

undergraduate studies at a diploma level as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework, undertaken concurrently with a Bachelor degree or Bachelor honours degree.

Confidential information

information which satisfies the criteria listed at Section 13.5 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

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 NCP Scholarship Program

Contractor (the Contractor)

DFAT's Managed Administration and Support Services Contractor for the New Colombo Plan

Disability

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.

Eligibility requirements

the mandatory requirements which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility requirements

Establishment allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(b)

Fellow

the meaning in Section 6.3

Fellow allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(b)

Foreign Arrangements Scheme

the Foreign Arrangements Scheme is administered by DFAT to implement *Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020*

Gender

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).

Graduate Certificate

Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework

Graduate Diploma

Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework

Grant

for the purposes of the CGRGs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:

- a. under which relevant money² or other [Consolidated Revenue Fund](#) (CRF) money³ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth, and
- b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.

Grant program

a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a DFAT Portfolio Budget Program.

[GrantConnect](#)

the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs.

Home university

the Australian university which nominated the applicant(s), at which an applicant or scholar is enrolled while applying for and undertaking their scholarship program and which will confer the student's degree upon completion.

Host institution

a university or other education provider where the scholar undertakes their study component in the host location.

² Relevant money is defined in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* ('**PGPA Act**'). See section 8, Dictionary.

³ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Host location

the geographic location(s) in the Indo-Pacific, as listed in section 5.5.1, in which the scholar undertakes their scholarship program.

Host organisation

the organisation at which the scholar undertakes an internship or mentorship in the host location

Insurance

the meaning in Section 5.8.4

Internship

work experience in which a scholar has learning goals relevant to their academic course and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies

Internship component

an internship undertaken as part of a scholarship program that meets the eligibility requirements in Section 5.3.1

Language training

training in a language undertaken as part of a scholarship program that meets the eligibility requirements in Section 5.4

Language training provider

a bona fide provider of language training at which a scholar undertakes language training in the host location

Low socio-economic status

students who are from a low socio-economic background, as measured by the lowest quartile of the ABS Socio-Economic Index for Areas Index of Education and Occupation measured at Statistical Area 1 level

Mental health allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(d)

Mental health service

professional counselling to foster a state of well-being, in which the scholar realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

Mentorship

a developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person guides a less experienced or less knowledgeable person, relevant to work, career, or professional development

Mobility program

see the meaning of **New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program** below

New Colombo Plan (NCP)

the NCP Scholarship Program, NCP Mobility Program, and NCP Alumni Program

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Liaison Officer for Scholarships

the person(s) designated by an Australian university to submit student nominations and receive NCP Program updates

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program

the program of that name administered by DFAT

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program

the meaning in Section 2.2

New Colombo Plan website

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan>

NCP Online

DFAT's online system for managing nominations, applications and scholarships

Outcome

the meaning in Section 2

Offshore campus

of an Australian university refers to an Australian university that has a branch campus in a location other than Australia

PBS Program

described within the entity's [Portfolio Budget Statement](#), PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.

Permitted gap

the meaning in Section 5.6.

Personal information

the same meaning as in the Privacy Act, which defines Personal Information as *"information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is readily identifiable: (a) whether the information or opinion is true or not; and (b) whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not."*

Primary Location

the meaning in Section 5.5.2

Privacy Act

the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)

Private sector organisation

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

the NCP Scholarship Program.

Reasonable accommodation

the provision of support, modifications and/or adjustments that meet the individual needs of scholars with disabilities to enable their participation in the NCP on an equal basis with other scholars

Regional/remote

a region designated as Regional or Remote by the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Australian Statistical Geography Standard

Scholar

an applicant awarded an NCP Scholarship

Scholarship

An award under the NCP Scholarship Program, including the relevant scholarship benefits

Scholarship agreement

the agreement entered into between the Commonwealth and a scholar prior to the start of their scholarship program, in substantially the form of the example provided on the NCP Website

Scholarship allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(c)

Scholarship benefits

Travel Allowance, establishment allowance, fellow allowance (if applicable), scholarship allowance, tuition fees (if applicable), mental health allowance and insurance as described in Section 5.8 or any part thereof, and any other financial or other assistance that may be available to a scholar based on the individual circumstances of a scholar's scholarship program, including as provided by private sector organisations

Scholarship program

the study component, internship component, mentorship activities and language training that applicants propose in their application (subject to any approved variations under the scholarship agreement in accordance with the process in Section 10.2)

Scholarship program commencement date

the date in the application on which the scholar is required to commence the scholarship program or such other later date in accordance with the scholarship agreement

Scholarship program completion date

the date in the application by which the scholar is required to complete the scholarship program or such other later date in accordance with the scholarship agreement

Scholarship term

the duration of a scholarship program starting from commencement and ending on the scholarship program completion date

Secondary location

the meaning in Section 5.5.3

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 to scholars, such as training opportunities

Strategic objective

the meaning in Section 2.1

Study component

an approved course of study at a host institution as part of a scholar's scholarship program that meets the eligibility requirements in Section 5.2

Travel allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(a)

Tuition fees

the monetary contribution available towards a scholar's tuition fees for a study component and language training (if any) as in Section 5.8.2

Value with money

refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources, as determined from a variety of considerations

When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:

- a. the quality of the project proposal and activities
- b. fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives
- c. that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved, and
- d. the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.



New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2022 Round Guidelines

University nominations open:	23 June 2021
University nominations close:	11.30 pm AEST on 3 August 2021
Student applications open:	4 August 2021
Student applications close:	11.30 pm AEST on 24 August 2021
Commonwealth policy and administering entity:	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au . Questions should be sent no later than 19 August 2021.
Date guidelines released:	16 June 2021
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted or restricted competitive

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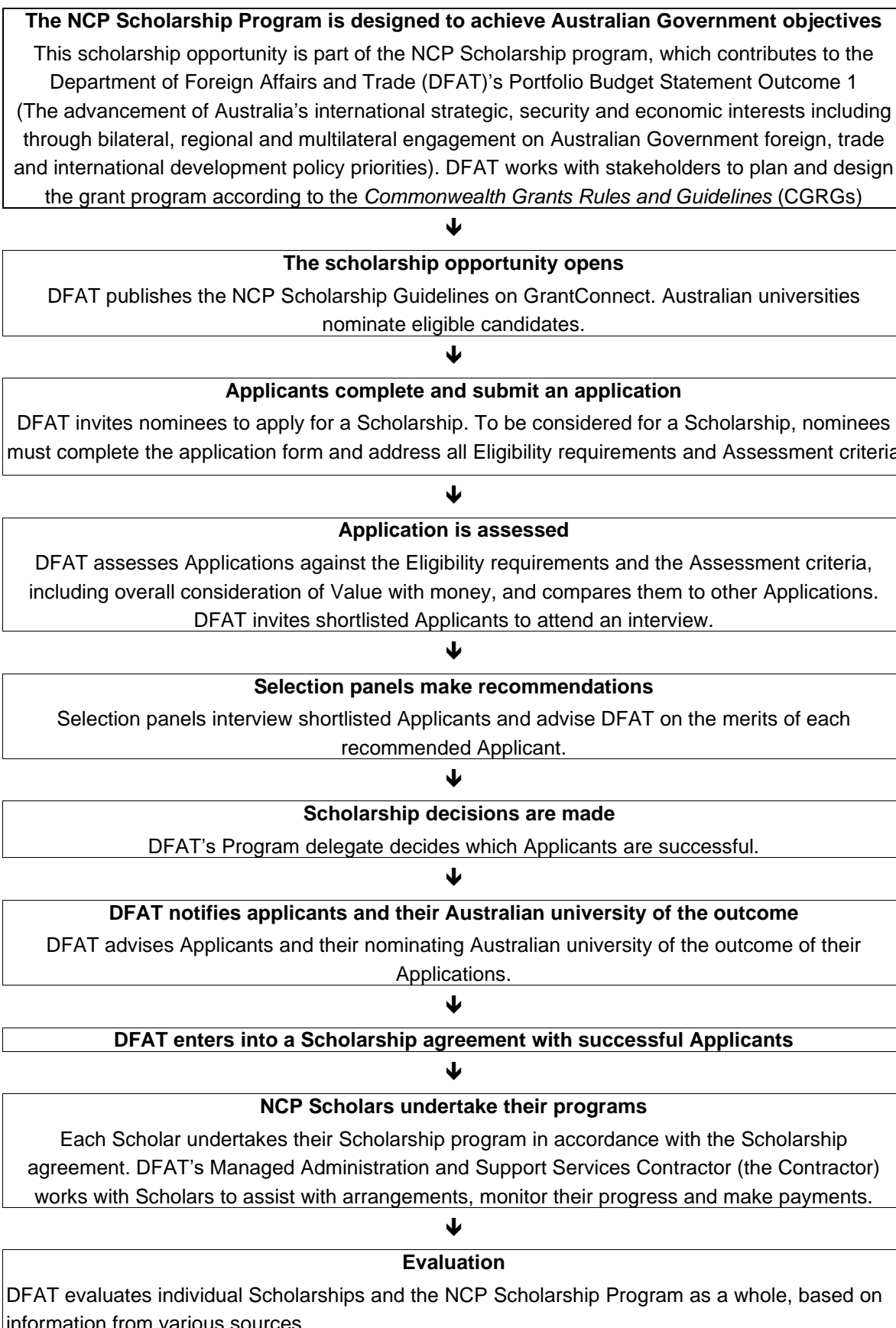
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1. New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program: 2022 Round processes



1.1. Introduction

These guidelines provide information about the 2022 round of the NCP Scholarship Program, including Eligibility requirements and processes for selecting scholarship recipients.

Before applying, Applicants must read these guidelines and the [Advice to Applicants](#). These guidelines take priority to the extent of any inconsistency with the Advice to Applicants.

These guidelines set out:

- a. the NCP strategic objective and outcomes
- b. the Eligibility requirements and Assessment criteria
- c. how Applications are selected
- d. how successful Applicants are notified
- e. how Scholars are supported, including payments and advice
- f. how evaluation of the NCP Scholarship Program may be conducted, and
- g. responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

DFAT administers the NCP according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines](#) (CGRGs).

2. About the grant program

2.1. Strategic objective and outcomes of the NCP

The NCP, launched in 2014, aims to lift knowledge in Australia of the Indo-Pacific by supporting Australian undergraduates to study and undertake internships in the region.

The NCP has two study programs: Scholarships (for study up to 19 months) and mobility grants (for shorter periods of study). Both programs include internships, mentorships and language training. The NCP also includes the NCP Alumni program, which is open to all NCP Scholarship and mobility students on completion of their award and supports alumni to maintain a connection to each other, the NCP and the Indo-Pacific region as they progress in their lives and careers.

The strategic objective of the NCP is to strengthen Australia's regional standing by building a diverse cohort of Australian alumni with deeper Indo-Pacific knowledge, capability and connections.

The intended outcomes of the NCP are:

- increased number and diversity of Australian university undergraduates with Indo-Pacific capability
- deeper people-to-people and institutional relationships between Australia and the Indo-Pacific, and
- students and alumni connected with leaders in government, business and civil society in the Indo-Pacific.

2.2. About the NCP Scholarship Program

The NCP Scholarship Program offers around 120 scholarships annually to a diverse cohort of Australian undergraduates studying a variety of disciplines in up to 40 Indo-Pacific locations. Scholars undertake offshore programs including study, language training and an internship and/or mentorship for up to 19 months.

The NCP Scholarship Program has an active alumni community, supporting past Scholars to share their experiences, promote the NCP and continue to develop knowledge of and professional links with the Indo-Pacific.

Due to pandemic travel restrictions, NCP Scholars' programs may not be able to proceed in the Indo-Pacific as proposed. As a temporary measure Government has agreed to virtual delivery of elements of the NCP program. Variations to approved programs will be considered (see section 10.2).

2.3. NCP Funding

Approximately \$43.87 million is available in total NCP funding for the 2021-22 financial year. This funding covers all aspects of NCP administration, including the Scholarship Program and Mobility Program.

2.4. Roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government

The NCP Secretariat within DFAT is responsible for strategic leadership, policy, administration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, business liaison, public diplomacy and alumni for the NCP.

DFAT has entered into a contract with a Managed Administration and Support Services Contractor (the Contractor) to deliver support services throughout the NCP Scholarship life-cycle – including during the application period, while scholars are on award and when they transition to the NCP Alumni Program.

DFAT, with the assistance of the Contractor, manages the Application and selection processes of the NCP Scholarship Program. Staff from DFAT and the Contractor involved in NCP selection have the skills and experience to assess Applications. All personnel are subject to the CGRGs and are required to declare any conflict of interest.

The Contractor is the first point of contact for Applicants and Australian universities on administrative matters, including eligibility for the NCP Scholarship Program, nominations, applications and attendance at interview.

DFAT is not responsible for arranging study components, Internships, Mentorships, Language training and travel arrangements (including visas and accommodation). Scholars, in consultation with their respective Home universities, Host institutions, Host organisations and/or Language training providers, and their individual Case managers (from the Contractor), are responsible for planning and carrying out their approved Scholarship program.

2.5. Roles and responsibilities of Australian universities

Each Australian university may nominate up to ten students to apply for the 2022 round of the NCP Scholarship Program. It is the responsibility of the Australian university to obtain consent from Applicants for their personal details being provided to DFAT as part of the nomination process. The Australian university must ensure the email addresses provided for the nominees are up-to-date and accurate.

After the nomination period closes, the Australian university must confirm with their nominated Applicant(s) that they have received an email invitation from DFAT to apply through NCP Online.

The Australian university must confirm that the Applicants' proposed study components are credit-bearing. The Australian university should assist Applicants to obtain evidence of acceptance by their Host institution and should support them to arrange Internships, Mentorships and Language training.

Australian universities should nominate a NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships (and an alternative contact, where possible) who will submit nominations on behalf of the Australian university and receive updates during the selection process. The NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships must provide consent for their name and contact details to be published on the NCP Website and for them to be contacted by DFAT.

Each participating Australian university must work with their Applicants to undertake risk assessments of Host locations proposed by Applicants (see Section 5.5.4). The Australian university must also work with Scholars to undertake risk assessments of any new host locations proposed by scholars during their program.

The Australian university must approve any Internship placements proposed by Scholars during their Program.

An Australian public university has obligations under the Foreign Arrangements Scheme when entering into arrangements with foreign entities, including certain foreign universities. These obligations must be complied with in relation to NCP Scholarship programs. Information about the Foreign Arrangements Scheme is available at <https://www.foreignarrangements.gov.au/>

The Contractor may contact and request the assistance of NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships when required.

2.6. Roles and responsibilities of Applicants

Each Applicant must ensure their Application is complete, including supporting documentation and referee reports, and is submitted by the Closing date/time. Applicants must meet any costs associated with preparing and lodging their Application.

Each Applicant is responsible for the decision to apply for and, if successful, to accept a Scholarship. 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 must make their own enquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel, including travel to host location(s), and be fully informed about the risks at all times. Applicants must read carefully the travel advice for their host location(s) and other relevant pages on the [Smartraveller](#) website for information about risks overseas and preparing for overseas travel. As outlined in section 5.5 (below), Scholars must not travel to a Host location or region within a Host location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller advice recommends 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' (see www.smartraveller.gov.au).

Successful Applicants must subscribe to the relevant travel advisories on Smartraveller prior to commencement of their Scholarship. If a crisis page on the Smartraveller website is activated during a major overseas incident, Scholars who are in those Host location(s) must register on that page.

Successful applicants must obtain and comply with the appropriate visa/s for the duration of their Scholarship.

Applicants must exhibit professional behaviour throughout the selection process and, if successful, will be expected to comply with their Scholarship Agreement and its incorporated documents such as the NCP Student Code of Conduct, during their Scholarship program. Evidence of unprofessional behaviour, including but not limited to, misrepresentation of the truth in an Application or at interview, or inappropriate social media posts or public commentary referencing the NCP Scholarship Program can be grounds for not awarding or for cancelling a Scholarship (See *NCP Scholarship Agreement*, *NCP Media and Publication Guidelines*, and *NCP Student Code of Conduct*)

Successful applicants will be expected to work with, and comply with directions given by, DFAT and the Contractor.

2.7. Roles and responsibilities of the Managed Administration and Support Services Contractor

The Contractor allocates a Case manager, and provides advice, assistance and program management, for each scholar. These services include, but are not limited to:

- a. administration of nomination, application and selection processes
- b. pre-departure support
- c. a briefing pack of relevant information
- d. Scholarship allowances
- e. advice and guidance during the Scholarship
- f. assistance with Scholarship variation requests, and
- g. assistance with a Scholar's return to Australia on completion of the Scholarship.

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1. NCP funding commitment

Funding for the NCP supports:

- a. a Scholarship program for up to 19 months of study, language training, internships and/or mentorships, and
- b. a Mobility program for shorter periods of study (up to semester length), language training, internships, mentorships and research. See NCP Mobility Guidelines for further detail on this program.

Detailed information regarding scholarship benefits is in Section 5.8.

3.2. Scholarship Grant period

The term of an Applicant's proposed Scholarship program must:

- a. have a duration between three and 19 months, and
- b. commence on or between 1 January 2022 and 15 December 2022; unless otherwise approved by DFAT.

4. Eligibility requirements

DFAT will only consider Applications that satisfy all Eligibility requirements.

4.1. Who is eligible to apply for a Scholarship?

To be eligible for a Scholarship, and to remain eligible during their Scholarship program, an Applicant must:

- a. be nominated for the NCP Scholarship Program by their Home university (see Section 4.2)
- b. be an Australian citizen
- c. not be a current citizen or permanent resident of their proposed host location(s)

- d. be enrolled in and undertaking, until completion of all study components of the NCP Scholarship Program, at least one Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree at an Australian campus of an Australian university. (If a Scholar concludes their home degree requirements upon the completion of the mandatory study component of their NCP Scholarship Program, they may apply to DFAT for approval to continue to undertake any remaining component(s) of their NCP Scholarship Program. This will be considered on a case by case basis.)
- e. be between 18 and 30 years of age (inclusive) for non-Indigenous applicants, or between 18 and 35 years of age (inclusive) for Indigenous applicants, on 1 January 2022
- f. 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
- g. not be a previous recipient of an NCP Scholarship, and
- h. not be an employee of the branch of DFAT that administers the NCP.

Scholars must continue to meet these Eligibility requirements during the term of their Scholarship.

Unless otherwise approved by DFAT, Scholars may not commence another offshore scholarship or mobility grant while undertaking their Scholarship program.

4.2. Nominations

Only students nominated by their Home university can apply for a Scholarship. Students interested in applying for a Scholarship should contact the NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships or the international office of their Home university.

Each Australian university may nominate up to ten students enrolled at that university, without ranking them. Each Australian university determines its own process for selecting nominees but should consider the Eligibility requirements and Assessment criteria.

DFAT strongly encourages Australian universities to ensure their nominees are representative of the diversity of the Australian undergraduate population. DFAT will consider reasonable accommodation to facilitate participation of undergraduates living with disability.

Australian universities must submit nominations online through the NCP Online system. DFAT will provide the Australian university NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships with instructions to access the online platform and submit nominations.

Eligible nominated students will be invited to submit an application. Applicants should be aware that the following details will be requested from their Home university in the online nomination:

- a. name
- b. gender
- c. date of birth
- d. email address
- e. mobile phone
- f. degree in which the nominee is enrolled
- g. academic transcript (official)
- h. intended primary location, and
- i. confirmation that a police check has commenced or been completed.

Each Applicant must commence a police check before submitting an Application. The completed police check must not be dated earlier than 1 May 2021. The Australian university must forward any adverse findings from that police check to the NCP Secretariat before the Applicant's NCP interview. The Australian Government expects a Scholar to enhance the reputation of Australia and the NCP whilst overseas. An adverse finding will not automatically disqualify an Applicant from receiving a Scholarship. However, if a successful Applicant is found to have a criminal record or conviction, including one that was not disclosed prior to the offer being made, DFAT may revoke or decline to grant a Scholarship to the Applicant.

Each participating Australian university is responsible for ensuring that it has appropriate policies in place relating to handling of personal information and has obtained each applicant's express consent to deal with and provide their personal information to DFAT.

Each Applicant is required to agree to the terms of use of such personal information (Section 13.4) when submitting their Application.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1. Eligible Scholarship program activities

To be eligible, an Applicant's proposed Scholarship program must (unless otherwise approved by DFAT):

- a. include at least one Study component commencing within three months of the Scholarship program commencement date. All Study components must be confirmed by the Host institution prior to Program commencement
- b. be for a Scholarship term:
 - i. of between three and 19 months in duration, and
 - ii. commence on or between 1 January 2022 and 15 December 2022, and
- c. at all times during the Scholarship term, involve the Scholar undertaking either:
 - i. a Study component
 - ii. a full-time Internship component
 - iii. full-time Language training, or
 - iv. a Permitted gap.

In addition, Scholarship programs may include:

- a. an Internship component (see Section 5.3) undertaken concurrently with a Study component or Language training
- b. a Mentorship (see Section 5.3) undertaken concurrently with a Study component, full-time Internship component or full-time Language training, or
- c. Language training (see Section 5.4) undertaken concurrently with a Study component or Internship component.

5.2. Study component

5.2.1. General

To satisfy the mandatory study component of a Scholarship program, a course of study must:

- a. be at least one full-time study 'period', which is either a semester or trimester as defined by the host institution
- b. except via a research-based honours program, be undertaken through attendance at face-to-face course delivery, on the Host institution premises or such other physical premises that the Host institution has approved for delivery of the teaching component of the course (and not via online, pre-recorded or other remote technology)
- c. be a course undertaken at the host institution, for which the applicant's home university has agreed to grant full-time academic credit towards a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree. Courses that provide whole or partial credit towards a concurrent Diploma (in addition to full-time academic credit towards a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree) are also permitted, and
- d. for scholars studying a research-based honours program, be supervised by an academic from their host institution (and scholars should in their application describe the benefits of undertaking their research program at their proposed host location).

Scholarship programs may include up to one academic year of Study components. Each study period as part of the academic year is regarded as a separate Study component.

When there is a period between the end of one Study component and the commencement of the next Study component, and a Scholar is not undertaking a full-time Internship or full-time Language training, the Scholar must apply (and have obtained approval) for a Permitted gap covering that period.

5.2.2. Host institution

Study components must not be undertaken at an offshore campus of an Australian university or a university established or headquartered outside the Host location. In exceptional circumstances, DFAT may waive this requirement where the Scholar is able to establish that there is a demonstrated benefit to the overall NCP Scholarship Program.

5.3. Internship and mentorship

DFAT strongly encourages Applicants to include one or more Internships or Mentorships in their proposed Scholarship program, where Host location visa requirements permit.

Internships and Mentorships do not need to be confirmed at the time of Application.

Scholars will be able to access the NCP Internship and Mentorship Network to identify Internship and Mentorship opportunities. Internships and Mentorships do not have to be arranged through the network. Prospective Internship or Mentorship placements, and Host organisations that a Scholar includes in their proposed Scholarship program are subject to due diligence and a risk review to ensure alignment with relevant DFAT policies.

5.3.1. Internship component

Internships enable scholars to have immersive work experiences relevant to their academic course and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies.

An Internship component as part of an NCP Scholarship program must be undertaken:

- a. on a full-time basis (between 22 and 38 hours per week) prior or subsequent to a Study component (subject to Section 5.1(a)) (The minimum duration of any full-time Internship placement is one week. The total cumulative duration of all full-time Internships undertaken during a Scholarship program must not exceed six months), or

- b. on a part-time basis, concurrent with a Study component or a full-time Language training component (there is no maximum duration), and
- c. in the Primary location, or in a Secondary location, in accordance with Section 5.5.

Unless otherwise approved by DFAT, an internship must be undertaken face-to-face at the premises of the host organisation, or elsewhere in the host location where the host organisation conducts regular business. An internship may not be undertaken online or remotely.

An Internship may be paid or unpaid. An internship must not incur any cost to the scholar, their Home university or their Host university, such as for training, program materials or delivery or staff wages. Attending informal or formal paid courses does not count as an Internship.

5.3.2. Mentorship

A Mentorship is a developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person guides a less experienced or less knowledgeable person, relevant to work, career, or professional development. Mentorships may only be undertaken concurrently with a Study component, full-time Internship component, or full-time Language training.

A Mentorship is negotiated between the Scholar and mentor, and can be undertaken face-to-face or via remote methods. There is no minimum time commitment for a Mentorship.

5.4. Language training

DFAT strongly encourages scholars to undertake language training as part of their NCP scholarship program. Language training as part of a scholarship program must be:

- a. undertaken in the same Host location as a study component or a full-time Internship component
- b. in an official language of the Host location where it is undertaken (other than English)
- c. delivered formally and face-to-face by a bona fide training provider (as assessed by DFAT in its sole and absolute discretion) and
- d. for a period of up to six months, undertaken either:
 - i. full-time, which means for a minimum of 15 contact hours per week. (The minimum duration of any full-time Language training is one week. The total cumulative duration of all full time Language training undertaken during the program must not exceed six months), or
 - ii. part-time, concurrently with a Study component or a full-time Internship component (there is no maximum duration).

5.5. Eligible locations

5.5.1. Host locations

Scholarship programs must be conducted only in the following host locations:

Bangladesh	French Polynesia	Maldives	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Bhutan	Hong Kong	Marshall Islands	Palau	Taiwan
Brunei Darussalam	India	Mongolia	Papua New Guinea	Thailand
Cambodia	Indonesia	Myanmar	Philippines	Timor-Leste
China	Japan	Nauru	Republic of Korea	Tonga
Cook Islands	Kiribati	Nepal	Samoa	Tuvalu

Federated States of Micronesia	Laos	New Caledonia	Singapore	Vanuatu
Fiji	Malaysia	Niue	Solomon Islands	Vietnam

5.5.2. Primary location

A Primary location is the Host location for which the Scholarship is awarded. The most substantial Study component and the majority of the duration of the Scholarship program must be completed in the Primary location.

5.5.3. Secondary locations

A Scholar may undertake their Scholarship program in more than one Host location (other than the Primary location) and/or at more than one Host institution or Host organisation. Where an Applicant proposes to undertake a Scholarship program in more than one Host location, the Applicant must outline in their Application the rationale for including the Secondary location/s in the Scholarship program.

If a Scholar undertakes Scholarship program components at a Secondary location, the total time spent at all Secondary locations combined must not exceed the total time spent at the primary location.

Inclusion of a Secondary location in a NCP scholarship program does not entitle a Scholar to additional Travel allowance or Establishment allowance (see Section 5.8.3).

5.5.4. Travel requirements

Scholars are responsible for making their own travel arrangements, including obtaining and complying with appropriate visas for each host location in which the scholar will undertake their scholarship program. Applicants must carefully consider the risks of travel to the proposed Host locations and regions before deciding whether to apply. Scholars must make their own independent enquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel and to the Host location(s), and ensure they are fully informed about the risks at all times.

If a Scholar has difficulty arranging a visa for their Host location(s), the Scholar should ask their Case manager for advice on obtaining visas for those locations, based on past scholars' experiences. Scholars must obtain travel medical advice, including any necessary vaccinations, prior to commencing travel.

Scholars must not travel to a Host location or region within a Host location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller advice recommends 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' (see www.smartraveller.gov.au). Where the Smartraveller advice is raised to 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' for a Host location during the application process or while a Scholar is on program, the Scholar's Case manager will work with the Scholar to identify an alternative Host location if required.

Scholars are required to acknowledge in their Scholarship agreement (see Section 10.1) that they have considered the risks carefully and investigated safety precautions before deciding to travel to any host location. Scholars must work with their Home university to address the issues identified in the risk assessment for Host locations undertaken in Section 2.5.

5.6. Permitted gaps

During the Scholarship term, gaps may be approved on the terms set out in the Scholarship agreement during which the Scholar is not required to undertake the Scholarship program on a full-time basis in accordance with Section 5.1(c).

A permitted gap must not result in the Scholarship term exceeding 19 months; or include any additional costs to the NCP Scholarship Program, the Contractor, the Host institution(s), the Host organisation(s) (if any) or Language training provider (if any).

A permitted gap may impact on a Scholar's entitlement to Insurance under the relevant policy terms. Scholars are responsible for informing themselves of the insurance policy terms and taking out any appropriate alternative or additional insurance cover where the insurance is impacted by a permitted gap.

A permitted gap is:

- a. **Gap leave** - when there is a gap between the end of and subsequent commencement of a Study component(s), full-time Language training or Internship component(s) and is for a maximum of:
 - i. in the first 12 month period of a Scholarship program, four weeks, and
 - ii. in any subsequent period of a Scholarship program, up to two weeks (in addition to any unused gap leave under Section 5.6(a)(i)).

Gap leave is calculated in calendar days between full-time components.

When applying for gap leave, Scholars must demonstrate it is reasonably necessary in order to complete their Scholarship program, with no reasonable alternatives. Scholars must apply for gap leave as soon as possible on becoming aware of the requirement for gap leave. Scholars must remain in one of the eligible Host locations during any period of gap leave.

Except in relation to the insurance, Scholarship benefits are unaffected by approved gap leave.

- b. **Leave of absence** - for a maximum of:
 - i. two weeks in the first 12-month period of a NCP Scholarship program, and
 - ii. one week in any subsequent period of a NCP Scholarship program (in addition to any unused leave of absence under Section 5.6ai).

Leave of absence is calculated in calendar days between full-time components.

A leave of absence may be for personal or professional development, compassionate and compelling reasons, or for issues relating to the Scholar's safety and security.

Except in relation to the insurance, scholarship benefits are unaffected by approved a leave of absence.

- c. **Suspension** - a suspension may be applied for on the terms set out in the NCP Scholarship agreement, including where a Scholar has exhausted their entitlement to apply for a permitted gap. DFAT may also require a suspension in accordance with the processes set out in the Scholarship agreement.

During any period of suspension there is no entitlement to, or payment of, NCP Scholarship benefits or payments for costs incurred during the suspension.

5.7. Community engagement and advocacy

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

These activities are in addition to the formal requirements of the Scholarship program. Scholars are strongly encouraged to share their experiences of their Scholarship program with the NCP Secretariat, other students and their community, including through engaging with the NCP alumni

community and through appropriate use of social media. They are strongly encouraged to participate in activities that promote the NCP, and to advocate for the NCP, including the benefits of studying and undertaking work placements in the Indo-Pacific.

5.8. Scholarship benefits

5.8.1. Overview

Scholars are responsible for their own financial circumstances while undertaking their NCP Scholarship program. Before applying for a Scholarship, an applicant must consider their personal circumstances and ensure that undertaking a Scholarship program will not overextend them financially. In particular, Applicants should be aware that exchange rates can fluctuate.

Scholars may receive the Scholarship benefits described in Sections 5.8.2, 5.8.3 and 5.8.4 during the Scholarship term, depending on their Scholarship program and whether they continue to meet the requirements for each Scholarship benefit in the Scholarship agreement.

The terms on which Scholars will receive Scholarship benefits are set out in the Scholarship agreement. In most cases, Scholarship benefits are paid as a reimbursement to the Scholar or directly to the Host institution, Host organisation, Language training provider or relevant third party, and not to the Scholar in advance. Any Scholarship benefits received must only be used for the purpose of the Scholarship program.

All amounts set out in this Section 5.8 or the Scholarship agreement are expressed in Australian dollars. Where amounts are converted into foreign currency (including where an invoice is paid on behalf of the Scholar, or the Scholar's eligibility for a reimbursement needs to be determined), the then current exchange rate will be applied, as determined by DFAT.

Not all expenditure during an NCP Scholarship program is eligible for grant funding. The DFAT program delegate makes the final decision on what constitutes eligible expenditure and may provide guidance if required.

5.8.2. Tuition fees

Tuition fees are payable directly to the relevant Host institution and any Language training provider, up to the maximum amount for each activity set out in the following table. A Scholar is responsible for any tuition fees in excess of the maximum amount per activity.

Item	Activity	Length of activity	Expenses payable under the Tuition fees	Maximum amount of expenses payable as Tuition fees for the activity
1	Study component	Any period up to a maximum of two semesters or three trimesters (as defined by the Host institution)	<p>1. Course fees at the Host institution where the Scholar is a fee-paying international student.</p> <p>The tuition fees only cover course fees at the Host institution if no current exchange agreement relevant to the Scholar's field of study is available between the Home university and the Host institution. The Scholar's entitlement to payment of course fees is considered and approved as part of the initial acceptance of applications. Any requested changes after Applications have been submitted are subject to consideration and approval on a case by case basis as a variation request under the Scholarship agreement, in accordance with the process in Section 10.2.</p> <p>2. Applicable student services and amenities fees at the Host institution.</p> <p>3. Other amounts payable to the Host institution where all of the following requirements are met:</p> <p>(a) the total of the costs is more than \$200</p> <p>(b) the costs are not covered under an applicable exchange agreement place</p> <p>(c) the Host institution certifies in writing that the costs are mandatory for completion of the Study component, and</p> <p>(d) an invoice for the relevant amount is issued by the Host institution.</p> <p>Examples of this cost may include compulsory course field trips within the host location; fieldwork research costs (Honours); compulsory materials or equipment (e.g. safety or personal protective equipment)</p>	Up to \$10,000 per semester or \$6,666 per trimester

Item	Activity	Length of activity	Expenses payable under the Tuition fees	Maximum amount of expenses payable as Tuition fees for the activity
2	Full-time Language training (more than one month, to a maximum of six months)	More than one month in total to a maximum of six months Full time Language training may be undertaken in blocks, provided that the total cumulative duration does not exceed six months	Fees for the Language training payable to the Language training provider	Up to \$10,000
3	Full-time Language training (one month or less)	Up to or equal to one month duration in total Full time Language training may be undertaken in blocks, provided that the total cumulative duration does not exceed one month	Fees for the Language training payable to the Language training provider	Up to \$1,500, minus any amount paid under item 4.
4	Part-time Language training	Any period	Fees for the Language training payable to the Language training provider	Up to \$1,500, minus any amount paid under item 3.

The maximum amount that a Scholar will be paid as tuition fees for activities undertaken during a NCP scholarship program is \$20,000 ('Tuition fees cap'). Once the Tuition fees cap is reached, the scholar will be responsible for the balance of any outstanding Tuition fees.

5.8.3. Allowances

- a. **A one off Travel allowance** of \$2,500 paid to a Scholar (\$1,250 paid prior to travel to the Host location and \$1,250 paid upon return to Australia at the end of the Scholarship term) to contribute to costs associated with the Scholar's eligible travel to and from the Host location.
- b. **A one off Establishment allowance** of \$2,500 paid to a Scholar to contribute to the costs associated with the Scholar settling in at their Host location. Fellows (see Section 6.3) will receive an additional payment of \$1,000 ('Fellow allowance') to purchase study materials for use during their Scholarship and to contribute to costs associated with the Fellow's promotion of the NCP. Scholars that are appointed as Fellow under more than one applicable award will receive a Fellow allowance of \$1,000 for each position.
- c. **A Scholarship allowance** of up to \$2,500 paid to a Scholar as a monthly stipend during the Scholarship term to contribute to the Scholar's basic living costs in their Host location.
- d. **A Mental health allowance** of \$1,000 reimbursed to a Scholar to contribute to the cost of any mental health services, including professional services (such as by qualified/registered psychologists and social workers to assist with personal issues, such as coping with life changes and fostering mental wellbeing).

5.8.4. Other scholarship benefits

Scholars also receive:

5.8.4.1 Insurance

Health and travel insurance while outside Australia, under an existing policy of cover and subject to certain terms and exclusions. On a case-by-case basis, a scholar may also be considered for, and if approved by DFAT, may receive, additional insurance cover for an existing condition that is not typically covered by the standard terms of insurance.

5.8.4.2 Allocation of Case manager

A dedicated Case manager from the Contractor is assigned to the Scholar for the duration of their scholarship term and provides services including pre-departure briefings, advice on health and travel insurance, advice and assistance relating to accommodation, and payment of Scholarship benefits.

5.8.4.3 Private sector sponsorship

Scholarships may also be sponsored by private sector organisations. All Scholars are eligible and will be considered for private sector sponsorship, which offers benefits in addition to the NCP Scholarship.

DFAT has entered into sponsorship agreements with private sector organisations for the provision of in-kind benefits to the NCP. Sponsors are able to associate their brand with the NCP such as through the NCP (Business Name) Scholarship for (Location). This is considered a 'Sponsored scholarship'. Benefits may be directed to Scholars, including enhanced Internship packages, training opportunities (such as leadership training) and other benefits. Agreements will be put in place regarding Scholar benefits and obligations under a Sponsored scholarship.

Sponsors provide DFAT with a set of criteria which DFAT uses to award Sponsored scholarships. Criteria may include discipline, location, Host institution/Home university, or other relevant factors.

For example, a Sponsored scholarship may be awarded to the top-ranked business student studying in Singapore.

Following the selection process set out in Section 8, DFAT will prepare a shortlist of scholars who meet the criteria for each sponsored scholarship. With the consent of the shortlisted scholar, DFAT will provide the scholar's details to the relevant sponsor. Sponsors will contact scholars directly and determine who will be awarded the sponsored scholarship.

Scholars offered a sponsored scholarship must negotiate directly with the sponsor on the timing of any additional benefits such as training opportunities.

6. The assessment criteria

6.1. Assessment criteria

In addition to meeting the Eligibility requirements, Applicants will be assessed in accordance with the process set out in Section 8 and against the following Assessment criteria (for both the written Application and at interview). Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview.

6.1.1. Academic excellence at the tertiary level (25 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated higher-order cognitive skills, creativity, innovation, communication skills, problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills in their university study. Applicants may also draw on academic achievements such as academic awards and commendations, publications, or other examples of academic excellence at the tertiary level.

High school academic achievements will not be considered. *(Maximum 300 words.)*

6.1.2. Leadership and engagement in the community (25 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. *(Maximum 300 words.)*

6.1.3. Adaptability and resilience (25 per cent weighting, maximum 300 words)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated ability to adapt to change, thrive in a different environment, and resilience in the face of challenges. *(Maximum 300 words.)*

6.1.4. Ability to contribute to NCP's strategic objective and outcomes (25 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated understanding of the Strategic objective and Outcomes of the NCP program, and how the Applicant and their proposed Scholarship program would contribute to the NCP Strategic objective and Outcomes, including on return to Australia. *(Maximum 300 words.)*

6.2. Other considerations

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

- a. Applicants proposing:
 - i. longer periods of Study components
 - ii. an Internship component or a Mentorship
 - iii. a period (or longer periods) of Language training, and/or

- iv. a Scholarship program with coherent correlation across the proposed Study component, Language training and Internship component
- b. achieving diversity of placement across Host locations
- c. representation from diverse student groups including but not limited to, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, students from a low socio-economic status background, students from regional/remote areas or universities, students who are first in their immediate family to attend university, students across the genders, female students studying in non-traditional fields, students with a disability, and students from a non-English speaking background
- d. diversity across fields of study and Australian universities
- e. how the proposal contributes to value with relevant money.

6.3. Selection of fellows

Fellows are NCP Scholars who are encouraged to play a strong leadership role in promoting the NCP while on their scholarship program and as part of the alumni network following completion of their Scholarship.

Selection panels will nominate, from amongst highly-ranked applicants, to be NCP Fellows:

- a. one Fellow for each host location
- b. one Indigenous fellow
- c. one ASEAN fellow whose proposed program will be conducted in an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) host location and most closely aligns with promoting close cooperation with ASEAN

DFAT's program delegate decides which candidates are offered a fellowship.

DFAT may establish further categories of fellows at its discretion.

7. How to apply

Before applying, each Applicant must read these Guidelines and the sample Scholarship agreement which can be found at [GrantConnect](#). Any alterations or addenda¹ will be published on GrantConnect. By registering on GrantConnect, individuals will be notified automatically of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for Australian Government grants information.

7.1. Overview

DFAT will contact individuals nominated by Australian universities by email and provide instructions on how to submit an Application.

Each Applicant must:

- a. complete the online application form available from a link provided to the applicant by DFAT, accessible via <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>
- b. provide all information requested
- c. address all Eligibility requirements and Assessment criteria

¹ Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents.

- d. include all necessary attachments, and
 - e. submit their Application online through <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/> by the closing time.
- An Applicant may only submit one Scholarship program proposal. An Applicant cannot change their Primary location in their Application once it has been submitted.

Each Applicant is responsible for ensuring their Application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code 1995* (Cth). Applications may be excluded from consideration, offers revoked or a Scholarship terminated if DFAT reasonably believes that false or misleading information has formed a component of an application. Further terms relating to the termination or cancellation of a Scholarship are set out in the Scholarship agreement.

If an Applicant finds an error in their Application after submitting it, they should contact DFAT immediately via email at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au. DFAT does not have to accept any additional information and DFAT will not accept requests to correct an Application after the closing time.

Each applicant should keep a copy of their Application and any supporting documents.

DFAT will acknowledge receipt of a submitted Application via an automatically generated email.

7.2. Written applications

Applicants must provide written responses to the Assessment criteria. An Applicant must also outline their proposed Scholarship program, including the mandatory Study component, any proposed Internships, Mentorships and Language training, and the Host location(s) in which they intend to undertake each component of their Scholarship. Applicants must nominate a Primary host location in their application.

7.3. Referee reports

Applicants must submit two referee reports with their Application, with at least one report from an academic referee.

Each referee must:

- a. comment substantively on the Applicant's abilities and experience relevant to the Assessment criteria, and
- b. hold a position that gives their comments credibility (for example, a position in the Applicant's Home university, workplace or community).

7.4. Attachments to the application

Applicants must also submit the following documentation:

- a. evidence of Australian citizenship (e.g. current Australian passport or Australian citizenship certificate)
- b. a letter of current enrolment from their Home university, including expected completion date for the course towards which the overseas study program will be credited
- c. a current, complete-to-date official academic transcript from their Home university
- d. evidence of affiliation with their proposed Host institution if applicable, and evidence that the Applicant or their Home university has made contact with the Host institution in relation to the proposed Study component:

- i. if intending to apply for an exchange place for the Study component under an agreement between the Applicant's Home university and the Host institution:
 - (1) a copy of an exchange agreement between the Applicant's Home university and the Host institution, or a letter from the Applicant's Home university outlining partnership arrangements to allow for commencement on or between 1 January 2022 and 15 December 2022, and
 - (2) an email or letter from the Applicant or the Applicant's Home university to the Host institution indicating the student is in the process of applying for the NCP Scholarship Program and, if successful, would be seeking to undertake a study program at that Host institution under the relevant exchange place arrangement for commencement on or between 1 January 2022 and 15 December 2022, or
- i. if intending to apply for a fee-paying place for the Study component:
 - (1) confirmation from the Home university that no current exchange agreement is in place between the Home university and the Host institution (as described in item 1 of the table at Section 5.8.2), and
 - (2) an email or letter from the Applicant or the Applicant's Home university to the Host institution indicating the student is in the process of applying for the NCP Scholarship Program and, if successful, would be seeking to undertake a study program at that Host Institution as a fee-paying student for commencement on or between 1 January 2022 and 15 December 2022
- e. a letter from the Applicant's Home university faculty, endorsed by the Home university's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships, attesting to the feasibility of the Applicant's proposed Study component, with reference to the requirements set out in Section 5.2.1.

Applicants must liaise with their Home university's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships or international office to obtain this evidence.

Applicants should only attach requested documents. Information that has not been requested will not be considered.

7.5. Timing of grant opportunity processes

The list below summaries the indicative key dates and steps in the selection process.

DFAT may amend the timeline at any time by posting a notice on GrantConnect.

Expected timing for this grant opportunity

- a. Guidelines published on GrantConnect (<https://www.grants.gov.au>): **16 June 2021**
- b. Australian universities nominate students. Nominations must be made via <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>: **23 June 2021 – 3 August 2021**
- c. Nominations close at 11.30pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST): **3 August 2021**
- d. Nominated students receive an invitation to complete an online application. Applicants complete and submit their application and supporting documentation: **4 August 2021 – 24 August 2021**
- e. Applications close at 11.30pm AEST ('Closing Time'): **24 August 2021**
- f. Applications are shortlisted. Shortlisted Applicants are notified: **September 2021**
- g. Shortlisted Applicants are interviewed: **September – October 2021**

- h. Selections are finalised. Minister for Foreign Affairs notified of selection outcomes. All successful and unsuccessful applicants are notified of the outcome of their application: **November 2021**
- i. Scholars are announced and their details published on the NCP website: **November - December 2021**
- j. Scholars commence their scholarship: **1 January 2022 – 15 December 2022**

7.6. Questions during the application process

Please direct any questions during the application period to the NCP Secretariat at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au. The NCP Secretariat will respond to questions within three working days. If applicable, answers to questions will be posted on GrantConnect.

The NCP Secretariat will not respond to questions received after **10 August 2021**.

8. The grant selection process

8.1. Assessment of applications

DFAT will only accept and consider Applications submitted by the Closing Time. DFAT assesses applications as follows:

Stage 1: Eligibility screening

Only Applications that meet all Eligibility requirements will be assessed in Stage 2.

Stage 2: Assessment of written applications against assessment criteria

Eligible Applications are assessed through a competitive process by a panel of assessors who are experienced in assessing Commonwealth grant applications or similar processes managed by Commonwealth departments. DFAT and/or the Contractor may comprise the panel of assessors. All panel members are subject to the CGRGs.

Each eligible Application is assessed against the Assessment criteria and against other applications. The merits of each Application are considered based on:

- a. how well it addresses the Assessment criteria, and
- b. how it compares to other Applications.

The assessors provide an order of merit to DFAT. The NCP Secretariat determines which applications are shortlisted for interview on the basis of the order of merit proposed by the assessment panel and other considerations outlined in Section 6.2.

Stage 3: Interviews

DFAT invites shortlisted Applicants to attend an interview in accordance with the timetable in Section 7.5.

Interview panels may comprise members with relevant expertise drawn from the following: senior government officials, private sector representatives, experts on Indo-Pacific affairs and international education specialists.

Panels rate each Applicant on the basis of the Assessment criteria and other considerations outlined in Section 6.2.

8.2. Who will approve the award of scholarships?

The NCP Secretariat moderates the interview panel recommendations and presents the findings to the program delegate (DFAT First Assistant Secretary responsible for the NCP) who decides the Applicants to be awarded a Scholarship, taking into account recommendations of the interview panels and the availability of NCP program funds.

The program delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- a. approval of the Scholarship
- b. grant funding amount to be awarded, and
- c. terms and conditions of the Scholarship.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to award or not award a Scholarship.

DFAT will advise the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the outcome of the round.

9. Notification of application outcomes

DFAT will advise Applicants of the outcome of their Application via email. DFAT will advise successful Applicants of any specific conditions attached to the Scholarship. DFAT will also advise Home universities of the successful Applicants from their university.

9.1. Feedback on applications

Individual feedback will not be provided to unsuccessful Applicants. After the conclusion of the round, DFAT will publish advice to Applicants on the NCP website. This includes advice on what makes a strong application and the main reasons applications were unsuccessful.

Unsuccessful Applicants may apply for any future grant opportunities under the NCP. Any new Application will be assessed based on the guidelines in place at the time.

9.2. Offer and acceptance processes

Offers of a Scholarship are subject to Applicants accepting and signing a Scholarship agreement and being able to obtain appropriate visa(s) for their Host location.

10. Successful grant applications

10.1. Scholarship agreement

A Scholar must enter into a legally binding Scholarship agreement with the Commonwealth before any Scholarship benefits can be paid to the Scholar or a third party and before the Scholar commences the Scholarship program.

Applicants should ensure they have read the sample Scholarship agreement before submitting their Application. The Australian Government will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Scholar or a third party in relation to a Scholarship program before a Scholarship agreement is entered into.

The Scholarship agreement will detail the Scholar's responsibilities in relation to the Scholarship program and the Scholarship benefits payable by the Australian Government. The Scholarship agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the program delegate. DFAT will identify these in the Scholarship agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the Scholarship agreement.

The version of the Guidelines in place at the closing date/time of this round will apply to the Scholarship program.

10.2. Variations to scholarship programs

After an offer is accepted, Scholars may apply to vary their Scholarship program to:

- a. incorporate a new Internship or Mentorship opportunity
- b. increase the duration of the Study component(s), Language training or Internship component, or
- c. change any other aspect of their Scholarship program where exceptional circumstances prevent them from completing the Scholarship program as initially proposed.

Any request for a variation must be made on a program variation request form provided by the Case manager, at least one month in advance of the proposed variation commencing, or such shorter period as required by the circumstances.

The decision to approve a variation to a Scholarship program will be made on a case-by-case basis by DFAT or the Contractor, in its sole and absolute discretion. Without limitation, DFAT or the Contractor, as the case may be, may consider:

- a. the merits of the request (and funding being available, if required) in respect of achieving the NCP Strategic objective and Outcomes
- b. demonstrated coherence across the Study components, and any Language training and Internship components of the NCP Scholarship Program, and
- c. ensuring that the Scholarship program remains consistent with the Eligibility requirements.

Scholars are liable for any financial commitments made by them in relation to their proposed change of Scholarship program where those commitments are made before receiving formal advice granting the Scholarship program variation.

10.3. Specific legislation and policies

Scholars must comply with all relevant Australian, as well as, the local laws and regulations of the Host locations, while in Australia and in host locations once on Scholarship. This includes compliance with laws in relation to child protection and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

DFAT does not tolerate exploitation, abuse or harassment. This applies within DFAT and extends to those we work with. NCP scholars must adhere to DFAT's Child Protection Policy and Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy, which set out expectations in relation to appropriate behaviours and reporting requirements. DFAT takes all allegations and reported incidents of exploitation, abuse and harassment seriously. NCP scholars also have an obligation to comply with their university's policies on child protection and PSEAH.

Scholars should take into account the [University Foreign Interference Taskforce – Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector 2019](#).

10.4. How DFAT pays the grant

The Scholarship agreement sets when and how Scholarship benefits will be provided to Scholars.

Some Scholarship benefits will be paid directly to the Scholar. Other Scholarship benefits, such as tuition fees, will be paid directly to the Host institution or Language training provider, as relevant.

Applicants should refer to the sample Scholarship agreement for further information.

10.5. Taxation

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. DFAT recommends Scholars seek independent professional advice on their taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). DFAT does not provide advice on particular taxation circumstances.

11. Announcement of grants

DFAT may publicise details of individual Scholarships and Scholars including, but not limited to:

- a. names of successful Scholars, their Home university, Host location(s), Host institution, Host organisation and Language training provider
- b. description of Scholarship programs being supported (including timing)
- c. the amount of funding awarded, and
- d. photographs of Scholars, both provided by Scholars or taken at DFAT and other events

12. How DFAT monitors grant activity

Requirements and expectations for monitoring a Scholar's Scholarship program are set out in the Scholarship agreement.

12.1. Keeping DFAT informed

Scholars must inform DFAT or the Contractor if anything is likely to affect their ability to undertake their Scholarship program, in accordance with the Scholarship agreement.

12.2. Reporting

Scholars must report in accordance with the Scholarship agreement.

12.3. Evaluation

The Australian Government reports on and evaluates the NCP Scholarship Program. DFAT and the Contractor may use information about scholars and their Scholarship program, Home university, Host institution, Host organisation and Language training provider for performance monitoring and management of the NCP, and to evaluate how effective the program is in achieving the NCP Strategic Objective and Outcomes. DFAT may also draw on information to create testimonials for NCP promotion.

DFAT and the Contractor will monitor performance and manage scholarships through [NCPOnline](#). Information about applicants, program outcomes and performance will also be collected.

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

NCP scholar alumni are expected to participate in surveys and other program monitoring and evaluation activities after completion of their scholarship program, as required by DFAT.

13. Probity

The Australian Government will ensure the grant opportunity process is fair, in accordance with the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

The Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme provides the public with visibility of the nature, level and extent of foreign influence on Australia's government and politics. It is recommended that you review obligations and responsibilities under the scheme at [Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme | Attorney-General's Department \(ag.gov.au\)](#).

DFAT may change these Guidelines from time to time. When this happens, the revised Guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

13.1. Enquiries and feedback

Section 9.1 provides information about feedback on Applications.

Enquiries and feedback about decisions for this scholarship opportunity should be sent to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

If an Applicant, or any other person, does not agree with the way DFAT has handled their feedback/complaint, they can refer the matter to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with DFAT.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

The Australian Government is not be 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.

13.2. Conflicts of interest

Any conflict of interest could affect the performance of the NCP Program or an NCP Scholarship. An Australian university that makes a nomination must disclose any conflict of interest in relation to a nomination in writing to ncp.secretariat@dfat.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 such steps as reasonably required by DFAT to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest.

Applicants must disclose any conflict of interest in relation to an Application in writing to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au at the time of submitting the Application or when the conflict of interest arises or is likely to arise. Applicants must take such steps as DFAT reasonably requires to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest for Australian government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct (section 13(7)) of the *Public Service Act 1999*. Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

13.3. Privacy

DFAT and its contractors are bound by the provisions of the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Privacy Act), including the Australian Privacy Principles which prescribe rules for handling personal information.

DFAT collects personal information, including from home universities and other third parties, in relation to applications under the NCP. Types of personal information collected include personal details (name, gender, date of birth and contact details), academic results and equity information.

Personal information will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which it was collected, or otherwise in accordance with the Privacy Act. DFAT and its contractors collect personal information where it is necessary for, or directly related to, the performance of our functions and activities, including to assess applications and to manage, administer, promote and evaluate the NCP Scholarship Program.

In accordance with the Privacy Act, information collected for a primary purpose may sometimes be used or disclosed for a related secondary purpose. For example, DFAT may disclose personal information in relation to applications under the NCP Scholarship Program to:

- a. other Australian Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Education, Skills and Employment,
- b. State and Territory Governments,
- c. Australian Parliamentary members and committees of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia,
- d. contractors and agents of DFAT,
- e. Australian universities, including to the NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships,
- f. Scholarship sponsors, including but not limited to companies or professional bodies, and
- g. media representatives, including foreign media representatives.

DFAT may also disclose personal information in relation to applications under the NCP Scholarship Program to overseas recipients in accordance with the Privacy Act. This may include host institutions, potential internship/mentorship host organisations, language training providers, host location governments/authorities and non-government organisations.

If an Applicant does not consent to DFAT or its contractor(s) collecting, using and disclosing their personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act, DFAT may not be able to process their Application.

DFAT's [Privacy Policy](#) contains information about DFAT's collection, use, disclosure and storage of personal information, including sensitive information, and how individuals may access and correct personal information that we hold.

13.4. Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, an Applicant or Scholar must agree not to disclose to any person, other than DFAT, any confidential information relating to the Application and/or Scholarship agreement, without DFAT's prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where the Applicant or Scholar is required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

DFAT may at any time, require the Applicant to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of DFAT's confidential information in a form DFAT considers acceptable.

DFAT will keep any information in connection with the Scholarship agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all three conditions below:

1. the Applicant/Scholar clearly identifies the information as confidential and explain why DFAT should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive

3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to the Applicant/Scholar or someone else.

DFAT will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the NCP Scholarship Program effectively
- employees and contractors of DFAT so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse DFAT programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- 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
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in NCP Scholarship Program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, or
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The Scholarship agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the Scholarship agreement.

13.5. Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (Cth) (FOI Act).

Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government, subject to exemptions.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: The Director, Freedom of Information and Privacy Law Section
 Legal Division
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 R.G. Casey Building, John McEwen Crescent
 BARTON ACT 0221

By email: foi@dfat.gov.au

14. Glossary

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which they live, or formerly lived

Academic transcript

an official document issued by the home university as a record of all completed units and results throughout the student's enrolment

Academic year

the annual period of study sessions of a home university and/or host institution

Administering entity

the entity responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes

Applicant

a person who is applying or has applied for an NCP Scholarship.

Application

an application for a scholarship under the NCP Scholarship Program

Assessment criteria

the principles or standards against which applications will be judged, as set out in Section 6

Australian Qualifications Framework

is available at: <https://www.aqf.edu.au/>.

Australian university

a registered higher education provider for the purposes of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (Cth) that is registered in an 'Australian university' category.

Bachelor Degree

bachelor Level 7 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Bachelor honours degree

undergraduate studies at Bachelor Honours Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework

Case manager

staff of the Contractor assigned to a scholar and responsible for providing that scholar with information and support to undertake their scholarship program

Closing date/time

the date and time beyond which applications will not be accepted, as specified in the Section 7.5

Commencement

the date in the application that the scholar is required to commence their scholarship program

Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)

establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.

Concurrent diploma

undergraduate studies at a diploma level as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework, undertaken concurrently with a Bachelor degree or Bachelor honours degree.

Confidential information

information which satisfies the criteria listed at Section 13.5 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

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 NCP Scholarship Program

Contractor (the Contractor)

DFAT's Managed Administration and Support Services Contractor for the New Colombo Plan

Disability

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.

Eligibility requirements

the mandatory requirements which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility requirements

Establishment allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(b)

Fellow

the meaning in Section 6.3

Fellow allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(b)

Foreign Arrangements Scheme

the Foreign Arrangements Scheme is administered by DFAT to implement *Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020*

Gender

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).

Graduate Certificate

Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework

Graduate Diploma

Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework

Grant

for the purposes of the CGRGs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:

- a. under which relevant money² or other [Consolidated Revenue Fund](#) (CRF) money³ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth, and
- b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.

Grant program

a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a DFAT Portfolio Budget Program.

[GrantConnect](#)

the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs.

Home university

the Australian university which nominated the applicant(s), at which an applicant or scholar is enrolled while applying for and undertaking their scholarship program and which will confer the student's degree upon completion.

Host institution

a university or other education provider where the scholar undertakes their study component in the host location.

Host location

the geographic location(s) in the Indo-Pacific, as listed in section 5.5.1, in which the scholar undertakes their scholarship program.

Host organisation

the organisation at which the scholar undertakes an internship or mentorship in the host location

Insurance

the meaning in Section 5.8.4

Internship

work experience in which a scholar has learning goals relevant to their academic course and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies

Internship component

an internship undertaken as part of a scholarship program that meets the eligibility requirements in Section 5.3.1

Language training

training in a language undertaken as part of a scholarship program that meets the eligibility requirements in Section 5.4

² Relevant money is defined in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* ('**PGPA Act**'). See section 8, Dictionary.

³ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Language training provider

a bona fide provider of language training at which a scholar undertakes language training in the host location

Low socio-economic status

students who are from a low socio-economic background, as measured by the lowest quartile of the ABS Socio-Economic Index for Areas Index of Education and Occupation measured at Statistical Area 1 level

Mental health allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(d)

Mental health service

professional counselling to foster a state of well-being, in which the scholar realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

Mentorship

a developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person guides a less experienced or less knowledgeable person, relevant to work, career, or professional development

Mobility program

see the meaning of **New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program** below

New Colombo Plan (NCP)

the NCP Scholarship Program, NCP Mobility Program, and NCP Alumni Program

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Liaison Officer for Scholarships

the person(s) designated by an Australian university to submit student nominations and receive NCP Program updates

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program

the program of that name administered by DFAT

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program

the meaning in Section 2.2

New Colombo Plan website

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/pages/new-colombo-plan>

NCP Online

DFAT's online system for managing nominations, applications and scholarships

Outcome

the meaning in Section 2

Offshore campus

of an Australian university refers to an Australian university that has a branch campus in a location other than Australia

PBS Program

described within the entity's [Portfolio Budget Statement](#), PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.

Permitted gap

the meaning in Section 5.6.

Personal information

the same meaning as in the Privacy Act, which defines Personal Information as *"information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is readily identifiable: (a) whether the information or opinion is true or not; and (b) whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not."*

Primary Location

the meaning in Section 5.5.2

Privacy Act

the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)

Private sector organisation

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

the NCP Scholarship Program.

Reasonable accommodation

the provision of support, modifications and/or adjustments that meet the individual needs of scholars with disabilities to enable their participation in the NCP on an equal basis with other scholars

Regional/remote

a region designated as Regional or Remote by the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Australian Statistical Geography Standard

Scholar

an applicant awarded an NCP Scholarship

Scholarship

An award under the NCP Scholarship Program, including the relevant scholarship benefits

Scholarship agreement

the agreement entered into between the Commonwealth and a scholar prior to the start of their scholarship program, in substantially the form of the example provided on the NCP Website

Scholarship allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(c)

Scholarship benefits

Travel Allowance, establishment allowance, fellow allowance (if applicable), scholarship allowance, tuition fees (if applicable), mental health allowance and insurance as described in Section 5.8 or any part thereof, and any other financial or other assistance that may be available to a scholar based on the individual circumstances of a scholar's scholarship program, including as provided by private sector organisations

Scholarship program

the study component, internship component, mentorship activities and language training that applicants propose in their application (subject to any approved variations under the scholarship agreement in accordance with the process in Section 10.2)

Scholarship program commencement date

the date in the application on which the scholar is required to commence the scholarship program or such other later date in accordance with the scholarship agreement

Scholarship program completion date

the date in the application by which the scholar is required to complete the scholarship program or such other later date in accordance with the scholarship agreement

Scholarship term

the duration of a scholarship program starting from commencement and ending on the scholarship program completion date

Secondary location

the meaning in Section 5.5.3

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 to scholars, such as training opportunities

Strategic objective

the meaning in Section 2.1

Study component

an approved course of study at a host institution as part of a scholar's scholarship program that meets the eligibility requirements in Section 5.2

Travel allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(a)

Tuition fees

the monetary contribution available towards a scholar's tuition fees for a study component and language training (if any) as in Section 5.8.2

Value with money

refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources, as determined from a variety of considerations

When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:

- a. the quality of the project proposal and activities
- b. fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives
- c. that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved, and
- d. the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.



Australian Government



NEW COLOMBO PLAN

Connect to Australia's future - study in the region

New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2021 Round Guidelines

Guidelines released:	19 February 2020
University nominations open:	24 June 2020
University nominations close:	21 July 2020
Student applications open:	22 July 2020
Student applications close:	11.30 pm AEST 18 August 2020
Commonwealth policy and administering entity:	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Enquiries:	Any questions should be sent no later than 5.00pm AEST on 11 August 2020, to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted or restricted competitive

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1 New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program: 2021 Round processes

The New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This scholarship opportunity is part of the above grant program, which contributes to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)'s Portfolio Budget Statement Outcome 1 (The advancement of Australia's international strategic, security and economic interests including through bilateral, regional and multilateral engagement on Australian Government foreign, trade and international development policy priorities). DFAT works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)



The scholarship opportunity opens

DFAT publishes the NCP Scholarship Guidelines on GrantConnect. Australian Universities nominate eligible candidates.



Applicants complete and submit an Application

DFAT will invite nominees to apply for a Scholarship. To apply, nominees must complete the application form and address all of the Eligibility Requirements and Assessment Criteria to be considered for a Scholarship.



DFAT assesses all Applications

DFAT assesses Applications against the Eligibility Requirements. DFAT assesses eligible Applications against the Assessment Criteria including overall consideration of Value with money and compares them to other Applications. DFAT invites shortlisted Applicants to attend an interview.



Selection panels make recommendations

Selection panels advise DFAT on the merits of each recommended Applicant.



Scholarship decisions are made

The decision maker decides which Applications are successful.



DFAT notifies Applicants and their Australian University of the outcome

DFAT advises Applicants and their nominating Australian University of the outcome of their Applications. DFAT may not notify unsuccessful Applicants until Scholarship Agreements have been executed with successful Applicants.



DFAT enters into a Scholarship Agreement with successful Applicants

DFAT will enter into a Scholarship Agreement with successful Applicants.



NCP Scholars undertake their Scholarship Program

Scholars undertake the Scholarship Program in accordance with the Scholarship Agreement. A Support Services Organisation will work with Scholars to assist with arrangements, monitor their progress and make payments.

**Evaluation**

DFAT evaluates the specific Scholarship activity and the NCP Scholarship Program as a whole. DFAT bases this evaluation on information from various sources.

1.1 Introduction

These Guidelines provide information about the 2021 round of the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program (NCP Scholarship Program), including Eligibility Requirements and processes for selecting scholarship recipients.

Before applying, Applicants must read these Guidelines and the [Advice to Applicants](#). These Guidelines take priority to the extent of any inconsistency with the Advice to Applicants.

These Guidelines set out:

- a. the NCP Strategic Objective and outcomes
- b. Eligibility Requirements and Assessment Criteria
- c. how Applications are selected
- d. how successful Applicants are notified and how Scholars receive payments
- e. how Scholars are monitored and evaluated, and
- f. responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

Capitalised terms used in these Guidelines are defined in the glossary at Section 14.

2 About the grant program

2.1 Strategic Objective and outcomes of the NCP

The NCP, launched in 2014, aims to lift knowledge in Australia of the Indo-Pacific by supporting Australian undergraduates to study and undertake internships in the region.

The NCP has two programs: scholarships (for study up to 19 months) and mobility grants (for short and longer-term study). Both programs prioritise Internships, Mentorships and Language Training.

The Strategic Objective of the NCP is to strengthen Australia's regional standing by building a diverse cohort of Australian alumni with deeper Indo-Pacific knowledge, capability and connections.

The intended outcomes of the NCP are:

- a. increase the number and diversity of Australian university undergraduates with Indo-Pacific capability
- b. deepen people-to-people and institutional relationships between Australia and the Indo-Pacific region, and
- c. students and alumni connected with leaders in government, business and civil society in the Indo-Pacific

DFAT administers the NCP according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines](#) (CGRGs).

2.2 About the NCP Scholarship Program

The NCP Scholarship Program provides around 120 Scholarships annually to a diverse range of Australian undergraduates studying a range of disciplines in up to 40 Indo-Pacific locations. Scholars are encouraged to undertake study, Language Training and an Internship and/or Mentorship for up to 19 months.

The NCP Scholarship Program is developing an active Scholar alumni community, supporting previous Scholars to share their experiences, promote the NCP and continue to develop knowledge of and professional links with the Indo-Pacific region.

2.3 Legislative authority

The authority under which public money is, or may become payable by the Australian Government for the NCP Scholarship Program can be found in Item 9, Part 4 of Schedule 1AB of the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997* (Cth).

2.4 Roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government

DFAT is responsible for strategic leadership, policy, administration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, business liaison, Internships, Mentorships, public diplomacy and alumni for the NCP.

DFAT manages the Guidelines and selection processes of the NCP Scholarship Program. Departmental officers and third party service providers who are involved in the selection processes have the skills and experience to assess Applications. All personnel are subject to the CGRGs and will complete a declaration covering issues associated with Conflict of Interest.

DFAT will consider reasonable accommodation to facilitate participation of Applicants with a disability.

DFAT is not responsible for arranging Study Components, Internships, Mentorships, Language Training, travel arrangements (including visas and accommodation). Scholars, in consultation with their Home Universities, Host Institutions, Host Organisations, Language Training Providers, and Case Managers are responsible for determining and carrying out their approved Scholarship Program.

The NCP Secretariat within DFAT is the first point of contact for Applicants and Australian Universities on administrative matters, including eligibility for the NCP Scholarship Program, nominations, Applications and attendance at interview.

2.5 Roles and responsibilities of Australian Universities

Each Australian University may nominate up to ten Applicants for the 2021 round of the NCP Scholarship Program. In doing so, it is the responsibility of the Australian University to obtain consent from Applicants for their personal details to be provided to DFAT as part of the nomination process. It is also the responsibility of the Australian University to ensure that the email addresses provided for the nominees are up-to-date and accurate.

After the closing of the nomination period, the Australian University is responsible for confirming with their nominated Applicant(s) that they have received an email invitation from the Australian Government to submit an Application. The Australian University must also confirm that the Applicants' proposed Study Components are credit-bearing. The Australian University should assist Applicants to obtain evidence of acceptance by a Host Institution and are encouraged to support them to arrange Internships, Mentorships and Language Training.

Interested Australian Universities are requested to nominate a NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships (and an alternative contact, where possible) who will submit nominations on behalf of the Australian University and receive updates throughout the selection process. The NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships must provide consent for their name and contact details to be published on the NCP Website and to be contacted by the Australian Government regarding the NCP Scholarship Program.

Each participating Australian University must work with Applicants to undertake risk assessments of Host Locations proposed by Applicants (see Section 5.5.4).

DFAT has entered into contracts with third party service providers (Support Services Organisations) to deliver support services during the application period, while Scholars are on award and when they transition to the NCP alumni program. The service providers are permitted with DFAT's specific consent, to contact and request the assistance of NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships when required.

2.6 Roles and responsibilities of Applicants

Each Applicant is responsible for ensuring their Application is complete, including supporting documentation and referee reports, and is submitted by the Closing Time. Applications submitted after the Closing Time will not be considered. Applicants must meet any costs associated with preparing and lodging their Application.

The decision to apply for and, if successful, accept a Scholarship is the responsibility of the Applicant. 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. Successful Applicants are responsible for obtaining and complying with the appropriate visa(s) for the duration of their Scholarship.

Applicants must make their own enquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel, including travel to the Host Location(s), and be fully informed about the risks at all times. Applicants are required to read carefully the travel advice for their Host Location(s) and other relevant travel information pages on the Smartraveller website (see www.smartraveller.gov.au) for information about risks overseas and how they can prepare for overseas travel.

Applicants are strongly discouraged from proposing program components in a Host Location, or region within a Host Location, for which Smartraveller travel advice recommends "Do not travel" or "Reconsider your need to travel" (except where the travel advice may be short term e.g. due to an unforeseen adverse event). Travel cannot proceed to such locations if that travel advice remains in place at the time of departure. In the case of 'Reconsider your need to travel' locations, Applicants and their Home Universities may consult further with the NCP Secretariat. Successful Applicants must subscribe to the relevant travel advisories on Smartraveller prior to Commencement of their Scholarship. If a crisis page on the Smartraveller website is activated during a major overseas incident, Scholars who are in those Host Location(s) must register their details on the page.

Applicants are required to exhibit professional behaviour throughout the selection process and, if successful, will be expected to act as ambassadors for Australia and the NCP during their Scholarship Program. Evidence of unprofessional behaviour, including but not limited to, misrepresentation of the truth in an Application or at an interview, or inappropriate social media posts or public commentary referencing the NCP Scholarship Program can be grounds for not awarding or for cancelling an awarded Scholarship. Further requirements are set out in the NCP Scholarship Agreement, NCP Media and Publication Guidelines, and NCP Student Code of Conduct.

Successful Applicants will be expected to work with, and comply with the directions given by, the Support Services Organisation (a third party service provider contracted by DFAT).

2.7 Roles and responsibilities of the 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. The services provided by the Support Services Organisation include, but are not limited to, providing Scholars with:

- a. pre-departure support
- b. a briefing pack of important information
- c. Scholarship allowances
- d. advice and guidance during the Scholarship
- e. assistance with Scholarship variation requests, and
- f. assistance with a Scholar's return to Australia on completion of the Scholarship.

3 Grant amount and grant period

3.1 NCP funding commitment

Funding for the NCP supports:

- a. a prestigious Scholarship Program for up to 19 months of study, Language Training, Internships and/or Mentorships, and
- b. a flexible Mobility Grant Program for both short and longer-term study, Language Training, Internships, Mentorships and research.

Total funding for the NCP for financial years 2020-21 to 2022-23 is outlined below. It covers all aspects of the NCP administration, including the Scholarship Program and Mobility Program funding.

- **2020-21:** \$50,933,000
- **2021-22:** \$50,933,000
- **2022-23:** \$50,933,000

Information regarding specific Scholarship Benefits is set out in Section 5.8.

3.2 Grant period

An Applicant's proposed Scholarship Program must be for a Scholarship Term:

- a. of between three and 19 months in duration, and
- b. commencing on or between 1 January 2021 and 15 December 2021.

4 Eligibility criteria

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a Scholarship?

To be eligible for a Scholarship, and to remain eligible during the Scholarship Program if a Scholarship is awarded, Applicants must:

- a. have been nominated for the NCP Scholarship Program by their Home University (see Section 4.2)
- b. be an Australian citizen
- c. not be a current citizen or permanent resident of their proposed Primary Location or any Secondary Location
- d. be enrolled in and undertaking, until completion of all Study Components, at least one Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree unit at an on-shore campus of an Australian University

- e. be between 18 and 30 years of age (inclusive) for non-Indigenous Applicants, or between 18 and 35 years of age (inclusive) for Indigenous Applicants, on 1 January 2021
- f. 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
- g. not be a previous recipient of a Scholarship under the NCP Scholarship Program, and
- h. not be an employee of the branch of DFAT that administers the NCP.

Successful Applicants are not permitted to commence another Australian Government funded off-shore scholarship or mobility grant (including under a NCP Mobility Program grant) while undertaking their Scholarship Program.

4.2 Nominations

Applicants must be nominated by their Home University in order to apply for a Scholarship. Eligible students who are interested in applying for a Scholarship should contact the NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships or the international office of their Home University. A list of NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships is available at www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/Scholarship-program/Pages/Scholarship-program.aspx.

Each Australian University is invited to nominate up to ten students enrolled at that Australian University (nominees are not ranked in any order by the Australian University). Each Australian University will determine its own process for selecting nominees, but is encouraged to consider the Eligibility Requirements and Assessment Criteria when conducting its nomination process.

DFAT strongly encourages Australian Universities to ensure their nominees are representative of the diversity of the Australian undergraduate population.

Nominations from Australian Universities must be submitted online through <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>. DFAT will provide the Australian University's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships with instructions on how to access the online platform and submit nominations (see Section 13.2 for contact details).

Applicants should be aware that the following details will be requested from their Home University in the online nomination form:

- a. name
- b. Gender
- c. date of birth
- d. email address
- e. mobile phone
- f. degree in which the nominee is enrolled
- g. Academic Transcript (official)
- h. intended Primary Location, and
- i. confirmation that a police check has been conducted for the purpose of the Application. The Australian University is required as part of the nomination process to forward any adverse findings from that police check to the NCP Secretariat.

All Applicants are required to undergo a police check prior to submitting an Application. This police check must not be dated earlier than 1 May 2020. It is an important consideration of the Australian Government that a Scholar will enhance the reputation of Australia and the NCP 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 DFAT may revoke or refuse to grant a Scholarship to the Applicant.

The Australian University is required to ensure that it has appropriate policies in place relating to the handling of Personal Information, and has obtained the Applicant's express consent to deal with and provide the Applicant's Personal Information to DFAT for the purposes of the NCP Scholarship Program.

Applicants are also required to agree to the terms of use of such Personal Information (which are set out in these Guidelines at Section 13.4) when submitting their Application.

4.3 Who is not eligible to apply for a Scholarship?

Individuals are not eligible to apply if they do not satisfy all Eligibility Requirements in Section 4.1.

5 What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible Scholarship Program activities

To be an eligible Scholarship Program, the Applicant's proposed Scholarship Program must:

- a. include at least one Study Component which must commence within three months following the Scholarship Program Commencement date
- b. be for a Scholarship Term:
 - i. of between three and 19 months in duration, and
 - ii. commencing on or between 1 January 2021 and 15 December 2021, and
- c. at all times during the Scholarship Term, involve the Scholar undertaking either:
 - i. a Study Component
 - ii. a Full Time Internship Component
 - iii. Full Time Language Training, or
 - iv. a Permitted Gap.

In addition to meeting the requirements in Section 5.1a to c above, Scholarship Programs may also include, as set out in this Section 5:

- a. an Internship Component undertaken concurrently with a Study Component or Language Training
- b. a Mentorship undertaken concurrently with a Study Component, Full Time Internship Component or Full Time Language Training, or
- c. Language Training undertaken concurrently with a Study Component or Internship Component.

5.2 Study Component

5.2.1 General

As set out in Section a, it is mandatory to undertake at least one Study Component as part of a Scholarship Program. To qualify as a Study Component, a course of study must:

- a. be at least one Full Time study 'period', which is either a semester or trimester as defined by the Host Institution

- b. except via a research-based honours program, be undertaken through attendance at face-to-face course delivery, on the Host Institution premises or such other physical premises that the Host Institution has approved for delivery of the teaching component of the course (and not via online, pre-recorded or other remote technology)
- c. be a course undertaken at the Host Institution, for which the Applicant's Home University has agreed to grant full-time academic credit towards a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree. Courses that provide whole or partial credit towards a Concurrent Diploma (in addition to full-time academic credit towards a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree) are also permitted, and
- d. for Scholars studying a research-based honours program, be supervised by an academic from their Host Institution (and Scholars are required in their Application to describe the benefits of undertaking their research program at their chosen Host Location).

Scholarship Programs are permitted to have up to one Academic Year of Study Components. However, each study period as part of the Academic Year is regarded as a separate Study Component. If the Scholar is not undertaking a Full Time Internship or Full Time Language Training in the relevant period, they will need to apply and have a Permitted Gap approved for any period between one Study Component finishing and the next Study Component commencing.

5.2.2 Host Institutions

Study Components must be undertaken at a Host Institution that is established and has its primary headquarters in the Host Location where the Study Component is undertaken, unless otherwise approved. Generally a Study Component will not be approved to be undertaken at an offshore campus of a Host Institution that is established or headquartered outside of the Host Location. However, undertaking Study Components at offshore campuses of a Host Institution established in or headquartered outside of the Host Location will be considered for approval on a case by case basis, where:

- a. there is a demonstrated benefit to the overall NCP Scholarship Program
- b. the body is established or has its primary headquarters in another eligible Host Location, or
- c. in respect of offshore campuses of Australian Universities, the Home University provides confirmation that:
 - i. there are no local Host Institutions in the proposed location that offer relevant courses that would receive credit from the Home University, and
 - ii. the offshore campus offers a genuine local experience, where Australian students are the minority of the student body and Scholars are taught predominantly by local and international academics.

5.3 Internship and Mentorship

In addition to at least one Study Component, where Host Location visa requirements permit, Scholars are strongly encouraged to propose to undertake one or more Internships or Mentorships as part of their Scholarship Program.

Internships and Mentorships do not need to be confirmed at the time of Application.

Once awarded the Scholarship, Scholars will be able to access the NCP Internship and Mentorship Network to identify Internship and Mentorship opportunities made available by registered organisations, although Internships and Mentorships do not have to be arranged through the network.

5.3.1 Internship Component

An Internship is a professional work experience in which a Scholar has learning goals relevant to their academic qualification and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies. Internships comprise an opportunity that enables Scholars to have immersive experiences in work environments at the Host Location.

To be eligible as an Internship Component as part of a Scholarship Program, an Internship:

- a. must be undertaken:
 - i. on a Full Time basis (which means for between 22 and 38 hours per week) for a maximum of up to six months, prior or subsequent to a Study Component (subject to Section 5.1(a)), or
 - ii. on a part-time basis concurrent with a Study Component or a Full Time Language Training Component, and
- b. must be undertaken in the Primary Location, or in a Secondary Location in accordance with Section 5.5.

An Internship must be undertaken face to face. An Internship is not permitted to be undertaken online or remotely.

An Internship may be paid or unpaid. An Internship must not incur a cost - attending informal or formal paid courses does not count as an Internship.

Scholars are encouraged to seek academic credit for their Internship, but this is not mandatory.

5.3.2 Mentorship

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. Mentorships may only be undertaken concurrently with a Study Component, Full Time Internship Component, or Full Time Language Training.

5.4 Language Training

Scholars are strongly encouraged to undertake Language Training as part of the Scholarship Program. To be eligible as part of a Scholarship Program, Language Training must:

- a. be undertaken in the same Host Location as a Study Component or a Full Time Internship Component
- b. be in an official language of the Host Location where it is undertaken
- c. be delivered formally and face-to-face by a bona fide training provider (as assessed by DFAT in its sole and absolute discretion) ('**Language Training Provider**'), and
- d. be for a period of up to six months, undertaken either:
 - i. Full Time, which means for a minimum of 15 contact hours per week, or
 - ii. part time concurrently with a Study Component or a Full Time Internship Component.

Scholars are encouraged to seek academic credit for their Language Training, but this is not mandatory.

5.5 Eligible locations

5.5.1 Host Locations

Scholarship Programs must be conducted only in the following Host Locations:

Eligible Host Locations

Bangladesh	French Polynesia	Maldives	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Bhutan	Hong Kong	Marshall Islands	Palau	Taiwan
Brunei Darussalam	India	Mongolia	Papua New Guinea	Thailand
Cambodia	Indonesia	Myanmar	Philippines	Timor-Leste
China	Japan	Nauru	Republic of Korea	Tonga
Cook Islands	Kiribati	Nepal	Samoa	Tuvalu
Federated States of Micronesia	Laos	New Caledonia	Singapore	Vanuatu
Fiji	Malaysia	Niue	Solomon Islands	Vietnam

5.5.2 Primary Locations

A Primary Location is the Host Location for which the Scholarship is awarded. The most substantial Study Component and the majority of the duration of the Scholarship Program must be completed in the Primary Location.

5.5.3 Secondary Locations

DFAT prefers that Scholarship Programs be conducted in a single eligible Host Location (with all Study Component(s) at a single Host Institution). However, Applicants may apply to undertake their Scholarship Programs in more than one eligible Host Location and/or at more than one Host Institution or Host Organisation.

Where an Applicant proposes to undertake a Scholarship Program in more than one Host Location ('**Secondary Location**'), the Applicant must nominate a Primary Location on their Application. DFAT will consider requests for a Secondary Location on a case by case basis. When proposing a Secondary Location, Applicants must explain how this better achieves the Strategic Objective and outcomes.

If a Scholar undertakes Scholarship Program components at Secondary Locations, the total time spent at Secondary Locations combined must not exceed the total time spent at the Primary Location.

Approval of a Secondary Location does not entitle a Scholar to receive additional Travel Allowance or Establishment Allowance (see Section 5.8.3).

5.5.4 Travel requirements

Scholars are responsible for making their own travel arrangements, including obtaining and complying with appropriate visas for each Host Location in which the Scholar will undertake their Scholarship Program. Applicants must carefully consider the risks of travel to all Host Locations and regions before deciding whether to apply. Scholars must make their own independent enquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel and to the Host Location, and to ensure they are fully informed about the risks at all times.

If a Scholar is having difficulty arranging a relevant visa, the Scholar should contact their assigned Case Manager to seek advice on obtaining visas in the relevant Host Location, based on past Scholars' experience. Scholars should obtain travel medical advice, including any necessary vaccinations, prior to commencement of travel.

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' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' (see www.smartraveller.gov.au). In the case of 'Reconsider your need to travel'

locations, Scholars and their Home Universities may consult further with the NCP Secretariat. Where the Smartraveller travel advice is raised to 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' for a Host Location during the application process or while a Scholar is on program, DFAT will work with the Scholar to identify an alternate Host Location if required.

Applicants must acknowledge in their Scholarship Agreement (see Section 10.1) that they have considered the risks carefully and investigated safety precautions before deciding to travel to any Host Location. This includes the Applicant working with their Home University to address the issues identified in the risk assessment for Host Locations undertaken in Section 2.5.

5.6 Permitted Gaps

During the Scholarship Term, gaps may be approved on the terms set out in the Scholarship Agreement ('**Permitted Gaps**'), during which the Scholar is not required to undertake the Scholarship Program on a Full Time basis in accordance with Section 5.1c.

A Permitted Gap must not result in the Scholarship Term exceeding 19 months; or include any additional costs to the NCP Scholarship Program, the Service Provider, the Host Institution(s), the Host Organisation(s) (if any) or Language Training Provider (if any).

A Permitted Gap is:

- a. Gap Leave - when there is a gap between the end of and subsequent commencement of a Study Component(s), Full Time Language Training or Internship Component(s) and is for a maximum of:
 - i. in the first 12 month period of a Scholarship Program, four weeks, and
 - ii. in any subsequent period of a Scholarship Program, up to two weeks (in addition to any unused Gap Leave under Section 5.6ai).

When applying for Gap Leave, Scholars must demonstrate it is reasonably necessary in order to complete their Scholarship Program, with no reasonable alternatives. Scholars must apply for Gap Leave as soon as possible on becoming aware of the requirement for Gap Leave. Scholars must remain in one of the eligible Host Locations during any period of Gap Leave.

- a. **Leave of Absence** - for a maximum of:
 - i. in the first 12 month period of a Scholarship Program, two weeks, and
 - ii. in any subsequent period of a Scholarship Program, up to one week (in addition to any unused Leave of Absence under Section 5.6ai).

A Leave of Absence must be for personal or professional development, compassionate and compelling reasons, or for issues relating to the Scholar's safety and security.

- a. **Suspension** - a suspension may be applied for on the terms set out in the Scholarship Agreement, including where a Scholar has exhausted their entitlement to apply for a Leave of Absence. DFAT may also require a Suspension in accordance with the process in the Scholarship Agreement.

Except in relation to the Insurance, Scholarship Benefits are unaffected by approved Gap Leave or a Leave of Absence. During any period of Suspension, there is no entitlement to or payment of Scholarship Benefits (and no amounts are payable following the Suspension for costs incurred during the Suspension).

A Permitted Gap may impact on a Scholar's entitlement to Insurance under the relevant policy terms. Scholars are responsible for informing themselves of the policy terms for the Insurance and

taking out any appropriate alternative or additional insurance cover where the Insurance is impacted by a Permitted Gap.

5.7 Community engagement and advocacy

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

These activities are in addition to the formal eligibility requirements for the Scholarship Program. Scholars are strongly encouraged to share the experiences of their Scholarship Program with the NCP Secretariat, other students and their community, including through engaging with the NCP alumni community and through social media. They are strongly encouraged to participate in activities that will encourage others to participate in the NCP, and to advocate for the NCP and its Strategic Objective and outcomes, including promoting the benefits of studying and undertaking work placements in the Indo-Pacific region.

5.8 Scholarship Benefits

5.8.1 Overview

Scholars are responsible for their own financial circumstances while undertaking their Scholarship Program. Before applying for a Scholarship, Applicants must consider their personal financial circumstances and ensure that undertaking a Scholarship Program will not overextend them financially. In particular, Applicants should be aware that exchange rates can fluctuate.

Scholars may receive the Scholarship Benefits described in Sections 5.8.2, 5.8.3 and 5.8.4 during the Scholarship Term, depending on their Scholarship Program and whether they continue to meet the requirements for each Scholarship Benefit in the Scholarship Agreement.

The terms on which Scholars will receive Scholarship Benefits are further set out in the Scholarship Agreement. In most cases, the Scholarship Benefits are either paid as a reimbursement to the Scholar or directly to the Host Institution, Host Organisation, Language Training Provider or relevant third party, and not to the Scholar in advance. Any Scholarship Benefits received must only be used for the purpose of the Scholarship Program and not for any other purpose.

All amounts set out in this Section 5.8 or the Scholarship Agreement are expressed in Australian dollars. Where amounts are converted into foreign currency (including where an invoice is paid on behalf of the Scholar, or the Scholar's eligibility for a reimbursement needs to be determined), the then current exchange rate will be applied, as determined by DFAT.

Not all expenditure during a Scholarship Program may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

5.8.2 Tuition Fees

Tuition Fees are payable directly to the relevant Host Institution and any Language Training Provider up to the maximum amount for each activity set out in the following table. The Scholar will be responsible for any tuition fees in excess of the per activity maximum amount.

Item	Activity	Length of activity	Expenses payable under the Tuition Fees	Maximum amount of expenses payable as Tuition Fees for the activity
1	Study Component	Any period up to a maximum of two semesters or three trimesters (as defined by the Host Institution)	<p>1. Course fees at the Host Institution where the Scholar is a fee paying international student.</p> <p>The Tuition Fees only cover course fees at the Host Institution if no current exchange agreement place relevant to the Scholar's field of study is available between the Home University and the Host Institution. The Scholar's entitlement to payment of course fees is considered and approved as part of the initial acceptance of Applications. Any requested changes after Applications have been submitted are subject to consideration and approval on a case by case basis as a variation request under the Scholarship Agreement, in accordance with the process in Section 10.2.</p> <p>2. Applicable student service and amenities fees at the Host Institution.</p> <p>3. Other amounts payable to the Host Institution where all of the following requirements are met:</p> <p>(a) the total of the costs is more than \$200</p> <p>(b) the costs are not covered under an applicable exchange agreement place</p>	Up to \$10,000 per semester or \$6,666 per trimester

Item	Activity	Length of activity	Expenses payable under the Tuition Fees	Maximum amount of expenses payable as Tuition Fees for the activity
			(c) the Host Institution certifies in writing that the costs are mandatory for completion of the Study Component, and (d) an invoice for the relevant amount is issued by the Host Institution.	
2	Full Time Language Training	More than one month in total to a maximum of six months Full Time Language Training may be undertaken in blocks, provided that the total cumulative duration does not exceed six months	Fees for the Language Training payable to the Language Training Provider	Up to \$10,000
3	Full Time Language Training	Up to or equal to one month duration in total Full Time Language Training may be undertaken in blocks, provided that the total cumulative duration does not exceed one month	Fees for the Language Training payable to the Language Training Provider	Up to \$1,500, minus any amount paid under item 4.
4	Part Time Language Training	Any period	Fees for the Language Training payable to the Language Training Provider	Up to \$1,500, minus any amount paid under item 3.

The maximum amount that the Scholar will be paid as Tuition Fees for all activities undertaken during a Scholarship Program is \$20,000 ('Tuition Fees Cap'). Once the Tuition Fees Cap is reached, the Scholar will be responsible for the balance of any outstanding tuition fees.

5.8.3 Allowances

- a. **A Travel Allowance** of \$2,500 paid to the Scholar (\$1,250 on travel to the Host Location and \$1,250 on return to Australia at the end of the Scholarship Term) to contribute to costs associated with the Scholar's eligible travel to and from the Host Location.
- b. **An Establishment Allowance** of \$2,500 paid to the Scholar to contribute to the costs associated with the Scholar settling in at their Host Location. Fellows (see Section 6.3) will receive an additional payment of \$1,000 ('**Fellows Allowance**') to purchase study materials for use during their Scholarship and to contribute to costs associated with the Scholar's promotion of the NCP. Scholars that are appointed as a Fellow under more than one applicable award will receive a Fellows Allowance of \$1,000 for each position.
- c. **A Scholarship Allowance** paid to the Scholar as a monthly stipend during the Scholarship Term of up to \$2,500 to contribute to the Scholar's basic living costs in their Host Location.
- d. **A Mental Health Allowance** of \$1,000 paid to the Scholar as a reimbursement to contribute to the cost of providers of Mental Health Services. The Mental Health Allowance provides reimbursement in relation to the cost of any provider of Mental Health Services, including professionals (such as psychologists and social workers) who are qualified or registered to assist with specific personal issues, such as coping with life changes and fostering mental wellbeing.

5.8.4 Other Scholarship Benefits

Scholars also receive:

5.8.4.1 Insurance

Health and travel insurance while outside of Australia, under an existing policy of cover and subject to certain terms and exclusions (the '**Insurance**'). On a case by case basis, the Scholar may also be considered for, and receive additional insurance cover for, an existing condition that is not typically covered by the standard terms of insurance.

5.8.4.2 Allocation of Case Manager

A dedicated Case Manager from the Support Services Organisation for the duration of their Scholarship Term who provides services including pre-departure briefings, advice on health and travel insurance, advice and assistance relating to accommodation, and payment of Scholarship Benefits.

5.8.4.3 Private Sector Sponsorship

Scholarships may also be sponsored by Private Sector Organisations (i.e. not DFAT).

DFAT has entered into sponsorship agreements with Private Sector Organisations (each a '**Sponsor**') for the provision of in-kind benefits to the NCP. Sponsors are able to associate their brand with the NCP through selected Scholarships, such as the NCP (Business Name) Scholarship for (Location). This is known as a '**Sponsored Scholarship**'. Benefits can be directed to Scholars and may include enhanced Internship packages, training opportunities (such as leadership training) and other benefits. Agreements will be put in place regarding Scholar benefits and obligations under the Sponsored Scholarship.

All Scholars are eligible for Sponsored Scholarships.

In determining Sponsored Scholarships, Sponsors provide DFAT with a set of criteria based on discipline, location, Host Institution/Home University, or other relevant factors. For example, the Sponsored Scholarship may be for top ranked business students studying in Singapore.

Following the selection process set out in Section 8, DFAT will prepare a shortlist of successful Applicants who have accepted the NCP Scholarship, and who meet the criteria for any Sponsored Scholarship. With the consent of the Scholar on the shortlist, DFAT will provide the Scholar's contact details to the relevant Sponsor. Sponsors will contact the Scholars directly, and determine who from the shortlist will be the recipient of the Sponsored Scholarship.

Scholars who have been selected to receive a Sponsored Scholarship will negotiate directly with the Sponsor on the timing of the receipt of any additional benefits – such as training opportunities.

6 The assessment criteria

6.1 Assessment criteria

In addition to meeting the Eligibility Requirements, Applicants will be assessed in accordance with the process set out in Section 8 and against the following Assessment Criteria (for both the written Application and the Applicant's performance at interview).

6.1.1 Academic excellence at the tertiary level *(25 per cent weighting)*

Assessment of this criterion will relate to:

- a. the Applicant's graded average achieved in tertiary studies (based on Home University grading), and
- b. 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.

6.1.2 Leadership and engagement 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.

6.1.3 Adaptability and resilience *(20 per cent weighting)*

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated ability to adapt to change, thrive in a different environment, and resilience in the face of challenges.

6.1.4 Ability to contribute to NCP Strategic Objective and outcomes *(25 per cent weighting)*

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated understanding of the Strategic Objective and outcomes, and how the Applicant and their proposed Scholarship Program would contribute to the Strategic Objective and outcomes, including on return to Australia.

6.2 Other considerations

Where Applicants have similarly meritorious claims in relation to the Assessment Criteria, preference may be given to:

- a. Applicants proposing:
 - i. longer periods of Study Components

- ii. an Internship Component or a Mentorship
 - iii. a period (or longer periods) of Language Training, and/or
 - iv. a Scholarship Program with coherent correlation across the proposed Study Component, Language Training and Internship Component
- b. achieving diversity of placement across Host Locations
 - c. representation from diverse student groups including but not limited to, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, students from a Low Socio-economic Status background, students from Regional/Remote areas or universities, students who are first in their immediate family to attend university, students across the Genders, female students studying in non-traditional fields, students with a Disability, and students from a non-English speaking background
 - d. diversity across fields of study and Home Universities, or
 - e. Applications that demonstrate a better achievement of the Strategic Objective and outcomes.

6.3 Selection of Fellows

Applicants may be appointed as Fellows under the NCP on a merit basis.

Subject to the Applicants' agreement, the top-ranked Indigenous Applicant will be acknowledged as the NCP Indigenous Fellow and the top-ranked Applicant for each Host Location will be acknowledged as an NCP Fellow. In addition, the Applicant whose proposed program will be conducted in an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) location and most closely aligns with Australia's interest in promoting close cooperation with ASEAN will be acknowledged as the NCP ASEAN Fellow.

DFAT may establish further categories of Fellows at its discretion.

Fellows are encouraged to play a strong leadership role in promoting the NCP while on their Scholarship Program, and as part of the alumni network following completion of their Scholarship Program.

7 How to apply

Before applying, the Applicant must read these Guidelines and the sample Scholarship Agreement which can be found at [GrantConnect](#). Any alterations and addenda¹ will be published on GrantConnect. By registering on GrantConnect, individuals will be automatically notified of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for Australian Government grants information.

7.1 Overview

DFAT will contact individuals nominated by Australian Universities by email and provide instructions on how to submit the Application.

- a. To apply Applicants must:

¹ Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for Applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents.

- b. complete the online application form available from a link provided to the Applicant by DFAT, accessible via <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>
- c. provide all the information requested
- d. address all Eligibility Requirements and Assessment Criteria
- e. include all necessary attachments, and
- f. submit their Application online through <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/> by the Closing Time.

Each Applicant may only submit one Scholarship Program proposal. Multiple proposals will not be considered. An Applicant cannot change their Primary Location in their Application once it has been submitted.

The Applicant is responsible for ensuring that their Application is complete and accurate. Applicants should note that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code 1995 (Cth)*. Applications may be excluded from consideration, offers revoked or a Scholarship Program terminated if it is the belief of DFAT that false or misleading information has formed a component of an Application. Further terms relating to the termination or cancellation of a Scholarship are set out in the Scholarship Agreement.

If an Applicant finds an error in their Application after submitting it, they should contact DFAT immediately via email at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au. DFAT does not have to accept any additional information, nor requests to correct an Application after the Closing Time.

If DFAT finds an error or information that is missing, it may seek clarification or additional information from the Applicant that will not change the nature of the Application. However, DFAT can refuse to accept additional information from the Applicant that would change their Application after the Closing Time.

The Applicant should keep a copy of their Application and any supporting documents.

DFAT will acknowledge that it has received the Application via an automatically generated email once the Applicant has submitted their Application on the system.

7.2 Written Applications

The main component of the written Application involves answering questions related to the Assessment Criteria. The Application also 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. The Primary Location must be decided at the time of Application.

7.3 Referee reports

Applicants must submit two referee reports with their Application. At least one report must be prepared by an academic referee.

Each referee must:

- a. be able to comment substantively on the Applicant's abilities and experience with respect to the Assessment Criteria, and
- a. hold a position that gives their comments credibility (e.g. a position in the Applicant's Home University, workplace or community).

Applicants should choose their referees carefully, as referees' reports may add considerable value to the assessment of an Application against the Assessment Criteria.

7.4 Attachments to the Application

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

- a. evidence of Australian citizenship (copy of birth certificate, current Australian passport or citizenship certificate)
- b. a letter of current enrolment from their Home University, including expected completion date for the course towards which the overseas study program will be credited
- c. a current, complete-to-date official Academic Transcript from their Home University
- d. the following evidence of affiliation with their proposed Host Institution if applicable, and evidence that the Applicant or their Home University has made preliminary contact with the Host Institution in relation to the proposed Study Component:
 - i. if intending to apply for an exchange place for the Study Component under an agreement between the Applicant's Home University and the Host Institution:
 - (1) a copy of an exchange agreement between the Applicant's Home University and the Host Institution, or a letter from the Applicant's Home University outlining partnership arrangements to allow for Commencement on or between 1 January 2021 and 15 December 2021, and
 - (2) an email or letter from the Applicant or the Applicant's Home University to the Host Institution indicating the student is in the process of applying for the NCP Scholarship Program and, if successful, would be seeking to undertake a study program at that Host Institution under the relevant exchange place arrangement for Commencement on or between 1 January 2021 and 15 December 2021, or
 - i. if intending to apply for a fee paying place for the Study Component:
 - (1) confirmation from the Home University that no current exchange agreement is in place between the Home University and the Host Institution (as described in item 1 of the table at Section 5.8.2), and
 - (2) an email or letter from the Applicant or the Applicant's Home University to the Host Institution indicating the student is in the process of applying for the NCP Scholarship Program and, if successful, would be seeking to undertake a study program at that Host Institution as a fee-paying student for Commencement on or between 1 January 2021 and 15 December 2021
- e. a letter from the Applicant's Home University faculty, endorsed by the Home University's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships, attesting to the feasibility of the Applicant's proposed Study Component, with reference to the requirements set out in Section 5.2.1.

Applicants must liaise with their Home University's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships or international office to obtain this evidence.

Applicants should only attach requested documents. Information that has not been requested will not be considered.

7.5 Timing of grant opportunity processes

The table below summaries the indicative key dates and steps in the selection process.

DFAT may amend the timeline at any time by posting a notice on GrantConnect.

Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Guidelines published on GrantConnect <https://www.grants.gov.au/>: 19 February 2020

Australian Universities nominate students. Nominations must be made via <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>: 24 June 2020 – 21 July 2020

Nominations close at 11.30pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST): 21 July 2020

Nominated students receive an invitation to complete an online Application. Applicants complete and submit their Application and supporting documentation: 22 July 2020 – 18 August 2020

Applications close at 11.30pm AEST (**'Closing Time'**): 18 August 2020

Applications are shortlisted. Shortlisted Applicants are notified: September 2020

Shortlisted Applicants are interviewed: September – October 2020

Selections are finalised. Minister for Foreign Affairs notified of selection outcomes. All successful and unsuccessful Applicants are notified of the outcome of their Application: November 2020

Scholars are announced and their details published on the NCP website: December 2020

Scholars commence their Scholarship: 1 January 2021 – 15 December 2021

7.6 Questions during the application process

Please direct any questions during the application period to the NCP Secretariat at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au. The NCP Secretariat will endeavour to respond to questions within three working days. If applicable, answers to questions will be posted on GrantConnect.

The NCP Secretariat will not respond to questions received after **5.00pm (AEST) 11 August 2020**.

8 The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of Applications

DFAT will only accept and consider Applications submitted by the Closing Time. DFAT will not accept late Applications.

DFAT will assess applications as follows:

Stage 1: Initial screening

DFAT (or its agent) will review Applications to ensure that they comply with Eligibility Requirements. Only Applications that meet these requirements will be assessed in Stage 2.

Stage 2: Detailed assessment of written Applications against Assessment Criteria

Eligible Applications are assessed through a competitive process by a panel of assessors who are experienced in assessing Commonwealth grant applications or similar processes managed by Commonwealth government departments. DFAT and/or third party providers may comprise the panel of assessors. All panel members are subject to the CGRGs.

Each eligible Application is assessed against the Assessment Criteria and against other Applications. The merits of each Application are considered based on:

- a. how well it meets the Assessment Criteria
- b. how it compares to other Applications, and
- c. whether it provides Value with relevant money.

The assessors will provide an order of merit to DFAT.

The NCP Secretariat Delegate (Director of the NCP Secretariat) will determine which Applications are shortlisted for interview on the basis of the order of merit proposed by the assessment panel and other considerations outlined in Section 6.2.

Stage 3: Interviews

Shortlisted Applicants will be advised that they are shortlisted and invited to attend an interview in accordance with the timetable set out in Section 7.5.

Interview panels will comprise members drawn from the following: senior government officials, private sector, experts on Indo-Pacific affairs, and/or the education sector.

Panels will rank each Applicant as Highly Recommended, Recommended or Not Recommended on the basis of the Assessment Criteria and other considerations outlined in Section 6.2. The NCP Secretariat will moderate the panel recommendations and present the findings to the Program Delegate to decide on the award of Scholarships.

8.2 Who will approve the award of Scholarships?

The Program Delegate (the DFAT Deputy Secretary responsible for the NCP Secretariat), or their delegate, will approve the applicants to be awarded Scholarships, taking into account recommendations of the interview panels and the availability of funds.

The Program Delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- a. the approval of the Scholarship
- b. the grant funding amount to be awarded, and
- c. the terms and conditions of the Scholarship.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a Scholarship.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs will be advised of the outcome prior to notification of successful and unsuccessful Applicants.

9 Notification of application outcomes

DFAT will advise Applicants of the outcome of their Application via email. DFAT will advise successful Applicants of any specific conditions attached to the Scholarship.

9.1 Feedback on Applications

There may be several reasons why an Application is not successful. After the conclusion of the round, the most common reasons for why Applications were not successful will be available on the [NCP website](#). Individual feedback will not be provided to unsuccessful Applicants.

Unsuccessful Applicants may apply for any future grant opportunities under the NCP. They should include new and/or additional information to address any weaknesses in an initial Application, noting that this does not guarantee success in a future round.

9.2 Offer and acceptance processes

Offers of a Scholarship are subject to Applicants accepting and signing a Scholarship Agreement and being able to obtain appropriate visa(s) for their Host Location.

10 Successful grant applications

10.1 Scholarship Agreement

A legally binding Scholarship Agreement must be entered into with the Commonwealth before any Scholarship Benefits can be paid to the Scholar or a third party and before the Scholar commences the Scholarship Program.

The Australian Government will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Scholar or a third party in relation to a Scholarship Program before a Scholarship Agreement is entered into.

The Scholarship Agreement will detail the Scholar's responsibilities in relation to the Scholarship Program and the Australian Government's commitment to providing the Scholarship Benefits. The version of the Guidelines in place when the Scholar submitted their Application will apply to their Scholarship Program.

Applicants should ensure they have read the sample Scholarship Agreement before submitting their Application.

The Scholarship Agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate. DFAT will identify these in the Scholarship Agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the Scholarship Agreement.

10.2 Variations to Scholarship Programs

After an offer is accepted, Scholars may apply to vary their Scholarship Program to:

- a. incorporate a new Internship or Mentorship opportunity
- b. increase the duration of the Study Components, Language Training or Internship Component, or
- c. change any other aspect of their Scholarship Program where exceptional circumstances prevent them from completing the Scholarship Program as initially proposed.

Any request for a variation must be made by way of a Program Variation Request Form provided by their Case Manager, at least one month in advance of the proposed variation commencing, or such shorter period as required by the circumstances.

The decision to approve a variation to a Scholarship Program will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Support Services Organisation or by DFAT, in its sole and absolute discretion.

Without limitation, DFAT may consider:

- a. the merits of the request (and funding being available if required) in respect of achieving the Strategic Objective and outcomes
- b. demonstrated coherence across the Study Components, and any Language Training and Internship Components of the Scholarship Program, and
- c. ensuring that the Scholarship Program remains consistent with the Eligibility Requirements.

Scholars will be liable for any financial commitments made by them in relation to their proposed change of Scholarship Program where those commitments are made before receiving formal advice granting the Scholarship Program variation.

10.3 Specific legislation and policies

Scholars are required to comply with all relevant Australian and local laws and regulations, in Australia and in Host Locations once on Scholarship. This includes compliance with laws in relation to child protection and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH).

DFAT has a zero tolerance approach to child exploitation, child abuse, and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. Scholars must comply with DFAT's policies (and the Support Services Organisation's policies) for [Child Protection](#) and [PSEAH](#) which set out expectations in relation to appropriate behaviours and reporting requirements for Scholars.

Scholars should take into account the [University Foreign Interference Taskforce - Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector 2019](#).

10.4 How DFAT pays the grant

The Scholarship Agreement sets out the times and manner in which Scholarship Benefits will be provided to Scholars.

Certain Scholarship Benefits will be paid to the Scholar directly. Other Scholarship Benefits, such as Tuition Fees, will be paid directly to the Host Institution or Language Training Provider, as relevant.

Applicants should refer to the sample Scholarship Agreement for further information.

10.5 Taxation

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. DFAT recommends Scholars seek independent professional advice on their taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). DFAT does not provide advice on particular taxation circumstances.

11 Announcement of grants

DFAT may make public details of individual Scholarships and Scholars, including, but not limited to:

- a. the names of successful Scholars, their Home University, Host Location(s), Host Institution, Host Organisation and Language Training Provider
- b. a brief description of the Scholarship Program being supported (and timing)
- c. the amount of funding awarded, and
- d. photographs of Scholars that are taken at DFAT events

12 How DFAT monitors grant activity

Requirements and expectations for monitoring a Scholar's Scholarship Program are set out in the Scholarship Agreement.

12.1 Keeping DFAT informed

Scholars must let DFAT or the Support Services Organisation know if anything is likely to affect their ability to undertake their Scholarship Program, in accordance with the Scholarship Agreement.

12.2 Reporting

Scholars must submit reports in line with the Scholarship Agreement.

12.3 Evaluation

NCP Scholarship Program reporting and evaluation are ongoing activities within the Australian Government. DFAT and the Support Services Organisation may use information about Scholars and their Scholarship Program, Home University, Host Institution, Host Organisation and Language Training Provider for performance monitoring and management of the NCP. Information may also be used by DFAT to create testimonials for NCP promotion.

DFAT and the Support Services Organisation will conduct performance monitoring and management online through <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>. Information about Applicants, Program outcomes and performance (including reports) will also be collected.

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

NCP Scholar alumni are also expected to participate in ongoing surveys and other program monitoring and evaluation activities after completion of their Scholarship Program, as required by DFAT.

13 Probity

The Australian Government will ensure the grant opportunity process is fair, in accordance with the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

DFAT may change these Guidelines from time to time. When this happens, the revised Guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

13.1 Enquiries and feedback

In relation to feedback on Applications, see Section 9.1.

Enquiries and feedback in relation to the processing and selection of Applications should be sent to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

If an Applicant, or any other person, is dissatisfied with the administration of the NCP Scholarship Program, they can raise their concerns with the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman generally prefers that DFAT is given an opportunity to deal with the complaint in the first instance. All complaints must be provided in writing.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone: 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

The Australian Government is not be 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.

13.2 Further information

For further information on NCP Scholarship Program administrative matters, including eligibility, Applications and funding arrangements, Private Sector Organisation liaison, Internships, Mentorships, public diplomacy and alumni, please contact DFAT at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

13.3 Conflicts of Interest

An Australian University that makes a nomination must disclose any Conflict of Interest in relation to a nomination in writing to ncp.secretariat@dfat.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 such steps as reasonably required by DFAT to resolve or otherwise deal with any Conflict of Interest.

Applicants must disclose any Conflict of Interest in relation to an Application in writing to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au at the time of submitting the Application or when the Conflict of Interest arises or is likely to arise. Applicants must take such steps as DFAT reasonably requires to resolve or otherwise deal with any Conflict of Interest. Obligations for the management of Conflicts of Interest by Scholars are set out in the Declaration of Acceptance.

13.4 Privacy

DFAT and their contractors are bound by the provisions of the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Cth) ('**Privacy Act**'), including the Australian Privacy Principles ('**APPs**'), which prescribe rules for the handling of Personal Information.

DFAT collects Personal Information, including from Home Universities and other third parties in relation to Applications under the NCP. Types of Personal Information collected include personal details (e.g. name, gender, date of birth and contact details), academic results and equity information.

The purpose of DFAT and their contractors collecting this information is for the management, administration, promotion and evaluation of the NCP Scholarship Program including to:

- a. assess Applications,
- b. administer the NCP, including monitoring performance and following up with Applicants about their experiences,
- c. promote the NCP, including but not limited to using Personal Information in promotional material, testimonials and hardcopy and/or online publications, and
- d. invite successful Applicants/Scholars to relevant functions and events in Australia or overseas.

DFAT may disclose Personal Information in relation to Applications under the NCP Scholarship Program to:

- a. other Australian Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Education, Skills and Employment,
- b. State and Territory Governments,
- c. Australian Parliamentary members and committees of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia,
- d. contractors and agents of DFAT,
- e. Australian Universities, including to the NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships,
- f. Scholarship sponsors, including but not limited to companies or professional bodies, and
- g. media representatives, including foreign media representatives.

DFAT may also disclose Personal Information in relation to Applications under the NCP Scholarship Program to overseas recipients, including Host Institutions, potential Internship/Mentorship Host Organisations, Language Training Providers, Host Location

governments/authorities and non-government organisations. By consenting for your personal information to be disclosed to an overseas recipient, you acknowledge that: (a) the overseas recipient will not be accountable under the Privacy Act; and (b) you will not be able to seek redress under the Privacy Act, if the overseas recipient handles your personal information in breach of the Privacy Act.

If you do not consent to DFAT or its contractor(s) collecting, using and disclosing your Personal Information, DFAT may not be able to process your Application for the NCP Scholarship Program.

If you have any concerns about DFAT's collection, use and disclosure of your Personal Information, please contact DFAT's Privacy Team at: privacy@dfat.gov.au.

For more information about DFAT's handling of Personal Information, including how we protect and manage Personal Information, how you can access or correct Personal Information we hold about you, or how you can make a complaint about an alleged privacy breach, please refer to DFAT's Privacy Policy - www.dfat.gov.au/privacy.html

13.5 Confidential Information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any Confidential Information relating to the Application and/or Scholarship Agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our Confidential Information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the Scholarship Agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

- a. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- b. the information is commercially sensitive, and
- c. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- a. Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the NCP Scholarship Program effectively
- b. employees and contractors of DFAT for the purpose of research, assessment, monitoring and analysing the NCP Scholarship Program
- c. employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- d. 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
- e. other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in NCP Scholarship Program reports and consultations
- f. the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- g. the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, or

h. a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The Scholarship Agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the Scholarship Agreement.

13.6 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (Cth) ('FOI Act').

Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government, subject to exemptions.

14 Glossary

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which they live, or formerly lived.

Academic Transcript

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

Academic Year

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

Administering Entity

when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes.

Applicant: a person who is applying or has applied for a Scholarship.

Application

an application for a Scholarship under the NCP Scholarship Program.

Assessment Criteria

the specified principles or standards, against which Applications will be judged and are set out in Section 6.

Australian Qualifications Framework

is available at: <https://www.aqf.edu.au/>.

Australian University

a registered higher education provider for the purposes of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (Cth) that is registered in an 'Australian University' category.

Bachelor Degree

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

Bachelor Honours Degree

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

Case Manager

a staff member of the Support Services Organisation who is assigned to a particular Scholar and who is responsible for providing the Scholar with information and support services to undertake their Scholarship Program.

Closing Time

the date and time specified as such in the timeline at Section 7.5, beyond which Applications will not be accepted.

Commencement

the date in the Application that the Scholar is required to commence their Scholarship Program.

Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)

establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.

Concurrent Diploma

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

Confidential Information

information which satisfies the three criteria listed at Section 13.5 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 NCP Scholarship Program.

Declaration of Acceptance

is provided online via: <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>.

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.

Eligibility Requirements

the requirements for:

- a. a Scholarship Program to be eligible for the NCP Scholarship Program as described in Section 5.1, and
- b. an Applicant to be eligible for the NCP Scholarship Program as described in Section 4.1.

Establishment Allowance

has the meaning in Section 1.b.

Fellow

has the meaning in Section 6.3.

Fellows Allowance

has the meaning in Section 1.b.

Full Time

for each of the Study Component, Internship Component and Language Training the requirements set out in the Eligibility Requirements.

Gender

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).

Graduate Certificate

Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Graduate Diploma

Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Grant

for the purposes of the CGRGs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:

- a. under which relevant money² or other [Consolidated Revenue Fund](#) (CRF) money³ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth, and
- b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.

Grant program

a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a PBS Program.

[GrantConnect](#)

is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs.

Guidelines

these NCP Scholarship Program guidelines, as amended from time to time.

Home University

the Australian University in which an Applicant or Scholar (as the case requires) is enrolled while Applying for or undertaking their Scholarship Program and will confer the student's degree upon completion.

Host Institution

a university or other education provider in which the Scholar undertakes their Study Component in the Host Location.

Host Location

the eligible geographic location in the Indo-Pacific region set out in Section 5.5 to which the Scholar will travel to undertake their Scholarship Program.

Host Organisation

the organisation in which the Scholar undertakes an Internship or Mentorship in the Host Location.

Insurance

has the meaning in Section 5.8.4.

Internship

² Relevant money is defined in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* ('**PGPA Act**'). See section 8, Dictionary.

³ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

a professional work experience in which a Scholar has learning goals relevant to their academic qualification and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies.

Internship Component

an Internship to be undertaken as part of a Scholarship Program that meets the Eligibility Requirements in Section 5.3.1.

Language Training

training in a language to be undertaken as part of a Scholarship Program that meets the Eligibility Requirements in Section 5.4.

Language Training Provider: a provider of language training at which the Scholar undertakes their Language Training in the Host Location.

Low Socio-economic Status

students who are from a low socio-economic 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.

Mental Health Allowance

has the meaning in Section 1.d.

Mental Health Service

professional counselling to foster a state of well-being, in which the Scholar realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

Mentorship

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 (NCP)

the NCP Scholarship Program and the NCP Mobility Program.

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Liaison Officer for Scholarships

the person(s) designated by each Australian University to submit student nominations and receive Program updates.

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program

the program of that name administered by DFAT.

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program

has the meaning in Section 1.1.

New Colombo Plan Website

www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan

Outcome

has the meaning in Section 2.

PBS Program

described within the entity's [Portfolio Budget Statement](#), PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.

Permitted Gap

has the meaning in Section 5.6.

Personal Information

has the same meaning as in the Privacy Act, which defines Personal Information as *“information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is readily identifiable: (a) whether the information or opinion is true or not; and (b) whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.”*

Primary Location

has the meaning in Section 5.5.2.

Privacy Act

the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

Private Sector Organisation

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

the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program.

Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation is the provision of support, modifications and/or adjustments that meet the individual needs of Scholars with disabilities to enable their participation in the New Colombo Plan on an equal basis with all other Scholars.

Regional/Remote

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

Scholar

a successful Applicant who receives a Scholarship.

Scholarship

a scholarship under the NCP Scholarship Program, and includes the relevant Scholarship Benefits provided to the Scholar under the NCP Scholarship Program.

Scholarship Agreement

the agreement to be entered into between the Commonwealth and the Scholar prior to the start of the Scholarship Program, in substantially the form of the example provided on the New Colombo Plan Website.

Scholarship Allowance

has the meaning in Section 5.8.3c.

Scholarship Benefits

the Travel Allowance, the Establishment Allowance, the Fellows Allowance (if applicable), the Scholarship Allowance, the Tuition Fees (if applicable), the Mental Health Allowance and the Insurance as described in Section 5.8 or any part thereof, and any other financial or other assistance that may be available to a Scholar based on the individual circumstances of a Scholar's Scholarship Program, including as provided by Private Sector Organisations.

Scholarship Program

the Study Component, Internship Component, Mentorship activities and Language Training that Applicants propose in their Application (subject to any approved variations under the Scholarship Agreement in accordance with the process in Section 10.2). The duration of the Scholarship Program is the Scholarship Term.

Scholarship Program Completion Date

is the date in the Application by which the Scholar is required to complete the Scholarship Program or such other later date in accordance with the Scholarship Agreement.

Scholarship Term

the term of a Scholarship Program starting from Commencement and ending on the Scholarship Program Completion Date.

Secondary Location

has the meaning in Section 5.5.3.

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.

Strategic Objective

has the meaning in Section 2.1.

Study Component

an approved course of study at a Host Institution as part of a Scholar's Scholarship Program that meets the Eligibility Requirements in Section 5.2.

Support Services Organisation

a third party provider(s) contracted by the Commonwealth of Australia to manage support services for Scholars or provide other services in relation to the NCP Scholarship Program.

Travel Allowance

has the meaning in Section 1.a.

Tuition Fees

the monetary contribution available towards a Scholar's tuition fees for a Study Component and Language Training (if any) as set out in Section 5.8.2.

Value with money

value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.

When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:

- a. the quality of the project proposal and activities
- b. fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives
- c. that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved, and
- d. the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.

New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program Guidelines 2020 Round

Opening date:	17 June 2019
Closing date and time:	11.30pm AEST on 21 August 2019 ('Closing Time')
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Administering Entity	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Department of Education and Training
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact: ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au Questions should be sent no later than 5.00pm AEST on 7 August 2019
Date Guidelines released:	15 February 2019
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted or restricted competitive

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1 New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program: 2020 Round processes

The New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This scholarship opportunity is part of the above grant program which contributes to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Portfolio Budget Statement Outcome 1: The advancement of Australia's international strategic, security and economic interests including through bilateral, regional and multilateral engagement on Australian Government foreign, trade and international development policy priorities. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) works with the Department of Education and Training (**Education**) and other stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines \(CGRGs\)](#).



The scholarship opportunity opens

DFAT publishes the NCP Scholarship Guidelines on [GrantConnect](#) and Australian Universities nominate eligible candidates.



You complete and submit an Application

If you are nominated by your Home University, you will be invited to apply for a Scholarship. To apply, you complete the application form and address all of the Eligibility Requirements and Selection Criteria to be considered for a Scholarship.



We assess all Applications

We assess the Applications against the Eligibility Requirements and notify you if you are not eligible. We assess eligible Applications against the Selection Criteria including an overall consideration of value with money and compare it to other Applications. We invite shortlisted Applicants to attend an interview.



Selection panels make recommendations

Selection panels provide advice to DFAT on the merits of each recommended Applicant.



Scholarship decisions are made

The decision maker decides which Applications are successful.



We notify you of the outcome

We advise the nominating Australian Universities and you of the outcome of your Application. We may not notify unsuccessful Applicants until Scholarship Agreements have been executed with successful Applicants.



We enter into a Scholarship Agreement

We will enter into a Scholarship Agreement with you if successful.



NCP Scholars undertake their Scholarship Program

You undertake the Scholarship Program in accordance with your Scholarship Agreement. A Support Services Organisation will work with you to assist with arrangements, monitor your progress and make payments.

**Evaluation**

We evaluate the specific Scholarship activity and the NCP Scholarship Program as a whole. We base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

1.1 Introduction

These Guidelines contain information relating to:

- (a) the process for selecting Australian undergraduate students for the 2020 round of Scholarships for the NCP Scholarship Program (the **NCP Scholarship Program**); and
- (b) the conditions of the award of Scholarship Programs for the NCP Scholarship Program.

You must read these Guidelines before filling out an Application.

Applicants should consider these Guidelines together with the 'Advice to Applicants' available on New Colombo Plan Website (<https://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/scholarship-program/Pages/advice-to-applicants.aspx>). These Guidelines take priority to the extent of any inconsistency with the Advice to Applicants. This document sets out:

- (a) the purpose of the NCP and Scholarship opportunity;
- (b) the Eligibility Requirements and Selection Criteria;
- (c) how Applications are considered and selected;
- (d) how successful Applicants are notified and how Scholars receive payments;
- (e) how Scholars will be monitored and evaluated; and
- (f) responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

Capitalised terms used in these Guidelines are defined in Section 14.

2 About the grant program

The NCP is a signature initiative of the Australian Government, which aims to lift knowledge of the Indo-Pacific region in Australia by supporting Australian undergraduate students to study and undertake internships in the region. It is part of DFAT's PBS Program 1.6: New Colombo Plan - Transforming Regional Relationships.

The NCP was launched in 2014 as a pilot in a limited number of Host Locations. Since then it has expanded to 40 Host Locations.

The NCP involves a prestigious scholarship program for study of up to 19 months and a flexible mobility grant program for both short and longer term study. Both programs prioritise opportunities for Internships and Language Training in addition to study.

The total cost of the NCP is \$152.8 million (2018/19 – 2020/21); \$51 million per annum ongoing from 2019/20.

DFAT and Education administer the NCP according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines](#) (CGRGs)¹.

2.1 Strategic objectives of the NCP

The NCP aims to:

- (a) lift knowledge of the Indo-Pacific in Australia, by increasing the number of Australian undergraduate students undertaking study, language training and internships in the region;

¹ <https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-guidelines.pdf>.

- (b) 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 NCP;
- (c) 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
- (d) increase the number of work-ready Australian graduates with experience in the Indo-Pacific region.

The NCP 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.

2.2 About the NCP Scholarship Program

The NCP Scholarship Program objectives (the '**Objectives**') are to:

- (a) provide around 120 prestigious and highly-competitive Scholarships to a diverse range of Australian undergraduate students studying a breadth of disciplines;
- (b) support more study experiences in a broad range of Indo-Pacific locations;
- (c) encourage Scholars to undertake longer term study, language study and an Internship and/or Mentorship;
- (d) engage Scholars, Australian Universities and other stakeholders in public diplomacy and outreach; and
- (e) continue to develop an active Scholar alumni community for previous Scholars to share their experiences, promote the NCP and continue to develop knowledge of and professional links with the Indo-Pacific region.

2.3 Legislative authority

The arrangement under which public money is, or may become payable by the Australian Government for the NCP Scholarship Program can be found in Item 9, Part 2 of Schedule 1AB of the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997* (Cth).

2.4 Role and responsibilities of the Australian Government

DFAT and Education administer the NCP Scholarship Program together.

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

Education coordinates the Application process and the administration of online systems, and is the first point of contact for Applicants and Australian Universities on administrative matters, including eligibility for the NCP Scholarship Program, nominations, Applications and attendance at interview.

DFAT and Education jointly manage the Guidelines and selection processes, and review direction and implementation of the NCP Scholarship Program. Departmental officers and third party providers may be involved in the selection processes and have commensurate skills and experience to assess Applications. To ensure the integrity of the selection process, these personnel are required to complete a declaration to cover issues associated with Conflicts of Interest.

Applicants should note that DFAT and Education are not responsible for arranging Study Components, Internships, Mentorships, Language Training, travel arrangements (including visas), or logistics in Host Locations (including accommodation). They will not direct Host Institutions,

Host Organisations, Language Training Providers, or Scholars about the manner in which the approved Scholarship Programs are carried out. These matters are for Home Universities, Host Institutions, Host Organisations, Language Training Providers and Scholars to determine.

Section 13.2 provides contact details for the Education.

2.5 Role and responsibilities of Australian Universities

Each Australian University is invited to identify and nominate up to ten Applicants for the 2020 round of the NCP Scholarship Program. In doing so, it is the responsibility of the Australian University to obtain consent from Applicants for their personal details to be provided to DFAT and Education as part of the nomination process. It is also the responsibility of the Australian University to ensure that the email addresses provided for the nominees are up-to-date and accurate.

Following the nomination process, the Australian University is responsible for confirming that their nominated Applicant(s) have received Australian Government guidance on the Application process (including a copy of these Guidelines). The Australian University must also confirm that the nominees' proposed Study Component is credit-bearing. The Australian University is requested to assist nominees to obtain the required evidence of acceptance by a Host Institution and are encouraged to support Applicants to arrange Internships, Mentorships and Language Training.

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

Each participating Australian University must work with Applicants to undertake risk assessments of Host Locations proposed by Applicants (see Section 5.5.4).

2.6 Role and responsibilities of Applicants

It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that their complete Application, including supporting documentation and referee reports, is submitted by the Closing Time. Applications not submitted by the Closing Time will not be considered. Applicants must meet any costs associated with preparing and lodging their Application.

The decision to apply for and, if successful, accept a Scholarship is the responsibility of the Applicant. 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. Successful Applicants are responsible for obtaining the correct visa(s) for the duration of their Scholarship.

Applicants should make their own 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. Applicants are required to read carefully the travel advice for their Host Location(s) and other relevant travel information pages on the Smartraveller website (see www.smartraveller.gov.au) (such as 'Studying overseas') for information about risks overseas and how they can prepare for overseas travel.

Applicants must not propose study components in locations where Smartraveller travel advice advises "Do not travel" or "Reconsider your need to travel", unless, in the case of "Reconsider your need to travel" an exemption has been sought and granted by the NCP Secretariat following the approval of the relevant Australian diplomatic mission. Successful Applicants 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, will be expected to act as ambassadors for Australia and the NCP during their Scholarship Program. Evidence of unprofessional behaviour, including but not limited to, misrepresentation of the truth in an Application or at an interview, or inappropriate social media posts or public commentary referencing the NCP Scholarship Program can be grounds for not awarding or for cancelling an awarded Scholarship. Further requirements are set out in the Scholarship Agreement.

2.7 Role and responsibilities of the 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. The services provided by the Support Services Organisation include, but are not limited to, providing Scholars with:

- (a) pre-departure support;
- (b) a briefing pack of important information;
- (c) the Scholarship allowances;
- (d) advice and guidance during the Scholarship;
- (e) assistance with Scholarship variation requests; and
- (f) assistance with a Scholar's return to Australia on completion of the Scholarship.

3 Grant amount and grant period

3.1 NCP funding commitment

Funding for the NCP supports:

- (a) a prestigious Scholarship Program for up to 19 months of study, Language Training, Internships and/or Mentorships; and
- (b) a flexible Mobility Grant Program for both short and longer-term study, Language Training, Internships, Mentorships and research.

Total funding for the NCP from 2019-20 is outlined below. It covers all aspects of the NCP administration, including Mobility Program funding.

2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
\$50,933,000	\$50,933,000	\$50,933,000

Further information regarding specific Scholarship Benefits is set out in Section 5.8.

3.2 Grant period

An Applicant's proposed Scholarship Program must be for a Scholarship Term:

- (a) of between three and 19 months in duration; and
- (b) commencing on or between 1 January 2020 and 15 December 2020.

4 Eligibility criteria

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a Scholarship?

To be eligible for a Scholarship, and to remain eligible during the Scholarship Program if a Scholarship is awarded, you must:

- (a) have been nominated for the NCP Scholarship Program by your Home University (see Section 4.2);
- (b) be an Australian citizen;
- (c) not be a current or previous citizen or permanent resident of your proposed Primary Location or any Secondary Location;
- (d) be enrolled, until completion of all Study Components, in at least one Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree unit at an on-shore campus of an Australian University;
- (e) be undertaking, until completion of all Study Components, at least one Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree;
- (f) be between 18 and 28 years of age (inclusive) on 1 January 2020;
- (g) have achieved a minimum 70 per cent graded average or equivalent for your undergraduate course at the time of Application, as determined by the nominating Home University; and
- (h) not be a previous recipient of a Scholarship under the NCP Scholarship Program.

Successful Applicants are not permitted to commence another Australian Government funded off-shore scholarship or mobility grant (including under a NCP Mobility Program grant) while undertaking their Scholarship Program.

4.2 Nominations

Applicants must be nominated by their Home University in order to apply for a Scholarship. Eligible Applicants who are interested in applying for a Scholarship should contact the NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships or the international office of their Home University. A list of NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships is available at www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/Scholarship-program/Pages/Scholarship-program.aspx.

Each Australian University is invited to nominate up to 10 students enrolled at that Australian University (nominees are not ranked in any order by the Australian University). Each Australian University will determine its own process for making nominations, but is encouraged to consider the Eligibility Requirements and Selection Criteria when conducting its nomination process. We strongly encourage Australian Universities to ensure that their nominees are representative of the diversity of the Australian undergraduate population.

Nominations from Australian Universities must be submitted online through <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>. Education will provide the Australian University's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships with instructions on how to submit nominations and access the online platform (see Section 13.2 for contact details).

Applicants should be aware that the following details will be requested from their Home University in the online nomination form:

- (a) name;
- (b) Gender;
- (c) date of birth;
- (d) email address;
- (e) mobile phone;
- (f) degree in which the nominee is enrolled;
- (g) Academic Transcript (official);
- (h) intended Primary Location (where known);

- (i) equity group (if relevant); and
- (j) confirmation that a police check has been conducted for the purpose of the Application. The Australian University is required as part of the nomination process to forward any adverse findings from that police check to the NCP Secretariat.

All Applicants are required to undergo a police check prior to submitting their Application. It is an important consideration of the Australian Government that a Scholar will enhance the reputation of Australia and the NCP 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 DFAT, may revoke or refuse to grant a Scholarship to the Applicant.

The Australian University is required to ensure that it has appropriate policies in place relating to the handling of Personal Information, and has obtained the Applicant's express consent to deal with and provide the Applicant's Personal Information to DFAT and Education for the purposes of the NCP Scholarship Program.

Applicants are also required to agree to the terms of use of such Personal Information (which are set out in these Guidelines) when submitting their Application.

4.3 Who is not eligible to apply for a Scholarship?

You are not eligible to apply if you do not satisfy each of the Eligibility Requirements in Section 4.1.

5 What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible Scholarship Program activities

To be an eligible Scholarship Program, the Applicant's proposed Scholarship Program must:

- (a) include at least one Study Component which must commence within three months following the Scholarship Program Commencement date;
- (b) be for a Scholarship Term:
 - (i) of between three and 19 months in duration; and
 - (ii) commencing on or between 1 January 2020 and 15 December 2020; and
- (c) at all times during the Scholarship Term, involve the Scholar undertaking either:
 - (i) a Study Component;
 - (ii) a Full Time Internship Component;
 - (iii) Full Time Language Training; or
 - (iv) a Permitted Gap.

In addition to meeting the requirements in Section 5.1(a) to (c) above, Scholarship Programs may also include, as set out in this Section 5:

- (d) an Internship Component undertaken concurrently with a Study Component;
- (e) a Mentorship undertaken concurrently with a Study Component, Full Time Internship Component or Full Time Language Training; or
- (f) Language Training undertaken concurrently with a Study Component, or Full Time Internship Component.

5.2 Study Component

5.2.1 General

As set out in Section 5.1(a), it is mandatory to undertake at least one Study Component as part of a Scholarship Program. To qualify as a Study Component, a course of study must:

- (a) be at least one Full Time study 'period', which is either a semester or trimester as defined by the Host Institution;
- (b) except via a research-based honours program, be undertaken through attendance at face-to-face course delivery, on the Host Institution premises or such other physical premises that the Host Institution has approved for delivery of the teaching component of the course (and not via online, pre-recorded or other remote technology);
- (c) be a course undertaken at the Host Institution, for which the Applicant's Home University has agreed to grant full-time academic credit towards a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree. Courses that provide whole or partial credit towards a Concurrent Diploma (in addition to full-time academic credit towards a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree) are also permitted; and
- (d) for Scholars studying a research-based honours program, be supervised by an academic from their Host Institution (and Scholars are required in their Application to describe the benefits of undertaking their research program at their chosen Host Location).

Scholarship Programs are permitted to have up to one Academic Year of Study Components. However, each study period as part of the Academic Year is regarded as a separate Study Component. If the Scholar is not undertaking a Full Time Internship or Full Time Language Training in the relevant period, they will need to apply and have a Permitted Gap approved for any period between one Study Component finishing and the next Study Component commencing.

5.2.2 Host Institutions

Study Components must be undertaken at a Host Institution that is established and has its primary headquarters in the Host Location where the Study Component is undertaken, unless otherwise approved. Generally a Study Component will not be approved to be undertaken at an offshore campus of a Host Institution that is established or headquartered outside of the Host Location. However, undertaking Study Components at offshore campuses of a Host Institution established in or headquartered outside of the Host Location will be considered for approval on a case by case basis, where:

- (a) there is a demonstrated benefit to the overall NCP Scholarship Program;
- (b) the body is established or has its primary headquarters in another eligible Host Location; or
- (c) in respect of offshore campuses of Australian Universities, the Home University provides confirmation that:
 - (i) there are no local Host Institutions in the proposed location that offer relevant courses that would receive credit from the Home University; and
 - (ii) the offshore campus offers a genuine local experience, where Australian students are the minority of the student body and Scholars are taught predominantly by local and international academics.

5.3 Internship and Mentorship

In addition to at least one Study Component, where Host Location visa requirements permit, Scholars are strongly encouraged to propose to undertake one or more Internships or Mentorships as part of their Scholarship Program.

Internships and Mentorships do not need to be confirmed at the time of Application.

Once awarded the Scholarship, Scholars will be able to access the NCP Internship and Mentorship Network to identify Internship and Mentorship opportunities made available by registered organisations, although Internships and Mentorships do not have to be arranged through the network.

5.3.1 Internship Component

An Internship is a professional work experience in which a Scholar has learning goals relevant to their academic qualification and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies. Internships comprise an opportunity that enables Scholars to have immersive experiences in work environments at the Host Location.

To be eligible as an Internship Component as part of a Scholarship Program, an Internship:

- (a) must be undertaken:
 - (i) on a Full Time basis (which means for between 22 and 38 hours per week) for a maximum of up to six months, prior or subsequent to a Study Component; or
 - (ii) on a part-time basis concurrent with a Study Component; and
- (b) must be undertaken in the Primary Location, or in a Secondary Location in accordance with Section 5.5.

An Internship must be undertaken face to face. An Internship is not permitted to be undertaken online or remotely.

An Internship may be paid or unpaid. An Internship must not incur a cost - attending informal and formal paid courses does not count as an Internship.

Scholars are encouraged to seek academic credit for their Internship, but this is not mandatory.

5.3.2 Mentorship

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. Mentorships may only be undertaken concurrently with a Study Component, Full Time Internship Component, or Full Time Language Training.

5.4 Language Training

In addition to at least one Study Component, Scholars are strongly encouraged to undertake Language Training. To be eligible as part of a Scholarship Program, Language Training must:

- (a) be undertaken in the same Host Location as a Study Component or a Full Time Internship Component;
- (b) be in an official language of the Host Location where it is undertaken;
- (c) be delivered formally and in person by a bona fide training provider (as assessed by DFAT in its sole and absolute discretion) ('**Language Training Provider**'); and
- (d) be for a period of up to six months, undertaken either:
 - (i) Full Time, which means for a minimum of 15 contact hours per week; or
 - (ii) part time concurrently with a Study Component or a Full Time Internship Component.

Scholars are encouraged to seek academic credit for their Language Training, but this is not mandatory.

5.5 Eligible locations

5.5.1 Approved Host Locations

Scholarship Programs may be conducted only in the following Host Locations:

Eligible Host Locations				
Bangladesh	French Polynesia	Maldives	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Bhutan	Hong Kong	Marshall Islands	Palau	Taiwan
Brunei Darussalam	India	Mongolia	Papua New Guinea	Thailand
Cambodia	Indonesia	Myanmar	Philippines	Timor-Leste
China	Japan	Nauru	Republic of Korea	Tonga
Cook Islands	Kiribati	Nepal	Samoa	Tuvalu
Federated States of Micronesia	Laos	New Caledonia	Singapore	Vanuatu
Fiji	Malaysia	Niue	Solomon Islands	Vietnam

5.5.2 Primary Locations

A primary location is the Host Location for which the Scholarship is awarded ('**Primary Location**'). A Primary Location must be where the Scholar undertakes the most substantial study component and the majority of their Scholarship Program. Study Components and/or Internship Components undertaken by a Scholar at other locations must not exceed the time spent at the Primary Location.

5.5.3 Secondary Locations

There is a strong preference that Scholarship Programs be conducted in a single eligible Host Location (with all Study Component(s) at a single Host Institution). However, Applicants may apply to undertake their Scholarship Programs in more than one eligible Host Location and/or at more than one Host Institution or Host Organisation.

Where an Applicant proposes to undertake a Scholarship Program in more than one Host Location ('**Secondary Location**'), the Applicant must nominate a Primary Location on their Application. DFAT and Education will consider requests for a Secondary Location on a case by case basis. When proposing a Secondary Location, Applicants should detail how this helps to achieve the Objectives.

Approval of a Secondary Location does not entitle a Scholar to receive an additional Travel Allowance or Establishment Allowance (see Section 5.8.3).

5.5.4 Travel requirements

Scholars are responsible for making their own travel arrangements, including obtaining visas and ensuring visa eligibility requirements are met for each Host Location in which the Scholar will undertake their Scholarship Program. If a Scholar is having difficulty in arranging a relevant visa, the Scholar should approach their assigned Case Manager to obtain further information on obtaining visas in the relevant Host Location based on past experience. Scholars should obtain travel medical advice, including any necessary vaccinations, prior to commencement of travel.

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' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' (see www.smartraveller.gov.au). Where there are exceptional circumstances, the NCP Secretariat may consider an exemption in the case of 'Reconsider your need to travel' locations, subject to the approval of the relevant Australian diplomatic mission.

Applicants must acknowledge in their Scholarship Agreement (see Section 10.1) that they have considered the risks carefully and investigated safety precautions before deciding to travel to any Host Location. This includes the Applicant working with their Home University to address the issues identified in the risk assessment for Host Locations undertaken under Section 2.5.

5.6 Permitted Gaps

During the Scholarship Term, gaps may be approved on the terms set out in the Scholarship Agreement ('**Permitted Gaps**'), during which the Scholar is not required to undertake the Scholarship Program on a Full Time basis in accordance with Section 5.1(c).

A Permitted Gap must not result in the Scholarship Term exceeding 19 months; or include any additional costs to the NCP Scholarship Program, the Service Provider, the Host Institution(s), the Host Organisation(s) (if any) or Language Training Provider (if any).

A Permitted Gap is:

- (a) **Gap Leave** - is for when there is a gap between the end of and subsequent commencement of a Study Component(s), Full Time Language Training or Internship Component(s) and is for a maximum of:
 - (i) in the first 12 month period of a Scholarship Program, four weeks; and
 - (ii) in any subsequent period of a Scholarship Program, up to two weeks (in addition to any unused Gap Leave under Section 5.6(a)(i)).

When applying for Gap Leave, Scholars must demonstrate it is reasonably necessary in order to complete their Scholarship Program, with no reasonable alternatives. Scholars must apply for Gap Leave as soon as possible on becoming aware of the requirement for Gap Leave. Scholars must remain in one of the eligible Host Locations during any period of Gap Leave.

- (b) **Leave of Absence** - for a maximum of:
 - (i) in the first 12 month period of a Scholarship Program, two weeks; and
 - (ii) in any subsequent period of a Scholarship Program, up to one week (in addition to any unused Gap Leave under Section 5.6(b)(i)).

A Leave of Absence must be for personal or professional development, compassionate and compelling reasons, or for issues relating to the Scholar's safety and security.

- (c) **Suspension** - a suspension may be applied for on the terms set out in the Scholarship Agreement, including where a Scholar has exhausted their entitlement to apply for a Leave of Absence. DFAT may also require a Suspension in accordance with the process in the Scholarship Agreement.

Except in relation to the Insurance, Scholarship Benefits are unaffected by approved Gap Leave or a Leave of Absence. During any period of Suspension, there is no entitlement to or payment of Scholarship Benefits (and no amounts are payable following the Suspension for costs incurred during the Suspension).

A Permitted Gap may impact on a Scholar's entitlement to Insurance under the relevant policy terms. Scholars are responsible for informing themselves of the policy terms for the Insurance and

taking out any appropriate alternative or additional insurance cover where the Insurance is impacted by a Permitted Gap.

5.7 Community engagement and advocacy

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

These activities are in addition to the formal eligibility requirements for the 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 NCP alumni community and through social media. They are encouraged to participate in activities that will encourage others to participate in the NCP and to advocate for the NCP and its Objectives, including promoting the benefits of studying and undertaking work placements in the Indo-Pacific region.

5.8 Scholarship Benefits

5.8.1 Overview

Scholars are responsible for their own financial circumstances while undertaking their Scholarship Program. Before applying for a Scholarship, Applicants must consider their personal financial circumstances and ensure that undertaking a Scholarship Program will not overextend them financially. In particular, Applicants should be aware that exchange rates can fluctuate.

Scholars may receive the Scholarship Benefits described in Sections 5.8.2, 5.8.3 and 5.8.4 during the Scholarship Term, depending on their Scholarship Program and whether they continue to meet the requirements for each Scholarship Benefit in the Scholarship Agreement.

The terms on which Scholars will receive Scholarship Benefits are further set out in the Scholarship Agreement. In most cases the Scholarship Benefits are either paid as a reimbursement to the Scholar or directly to the Host Institution, Host Organisation, Language Training Provider or relevant third party, and not to the Scholar in advance. Any Scholarship Benefits received must only be used for the purpose of the Scholarship Program and not for any other purpose.

All amounts set out in this Section 5.8 or the Scholarship Agreement are expressed in Australian dollars. Where amounts are converted into foreign currency (including where an invoice is paid on behalf of the Scholar, or the Scholar's eligibility for a reimbursement needs to be determined), the then current exchange rate will be applied, as determined by DFAT.

Not all expenditure on your Scholarship Program may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

5.8.2 Tuition Fees

Tuition Fees are payable directly to the relevant Host Institution and any Language Training Provider up to the maximum amount for each activity set out in the following table. The Scholar will be responsible for any tuition fees in excess of the per activity maximum amount.

Item	Activity	Length of activity	Expenses payable under the Tuition Fees	Maximum amount of expenses payable as Tuition Fees for the activity
1	Study Component	Any period up to a maximum of two semesters or three trimesters (as defined by the Host Institution)	<p>1. Course fees at the Host Institution where the Scholar is a fee paying international student.</p> <p>The Tuition Fees only cover course fees at the Host Institution if no current exchange agreement place relevant to the Scholar's field of study is available between the Home University and the Host Institution. The Scholar's entitlement to payment of course fees is considered and approved as part of the initial acceptance of Applications. Any requested changes after Applications have been submitted are subject to consideration and approval on a case by case basis as a variation request under the Scholarship Agreement, in accordance with the process in Section 10.2.</p> <p>2. Applicable student service and amenities fees at the Host Institution.</p> <p>3. Other amounts payable to the Host Institution where all of the following requirements are met:</p> <p>(a) the total of the costs are more than \$200;</p>	Up to \$10,000 per semester or \$6,666 per trimester

Item	Activity	Length of activity	Expenses payable under the Tuition Fees	Maximum amount of expenses payable as Tuition Fees for the activity
			<p>(b) the costs are not covered under an applicable exchange agreement place;</p> <p>(c) the Host Institution certifies in writing that the costs are mandatory for completion of the Study Component; and</p> <p>(d) an invoice for the relevant amount is issued by the Host Institution.</p>	
2	Full Time Language Training	<p>More than one month in total to a maximum of six months</p> <p>Full Time Language Training may be undertaken in blocks, provided that the total cumulative duration does not exceed six months</p>	Fees for the Language Training payable to the Language Training Provider	Up to \$10,000
3	Full Time Language Training	<p>Up to or equal to one month duration in total</p> <p>Full Time Language Training may be undertaken in blocks, provided that the total cumulative duration does not exceed one month</p>	Fees for the Language Training payable to the Language Training Provider	Up to \$1,500, minus any amount paid under item 4.

Item	Activity	Length of activity	Expenses payable under the Tuition Fees	Maximum amount of expenses payable as Tuition Fees for the activity
4	Part Time Language Training	Any period	Fees for the Language Training payable to the Language Training Provider	Up to \$1,500, minus any amount paid under item 3.

The maximum amount that the Scholar will be paid as Tuition Fees for all activities undertaken during a Scholarship Program is \$20,000 (**'Tuition Fees Cap'**). Once the Tuition Fees Cap is reached, the Scholar will be responsible for the balance of any outstanding tuition fees.

5.8.3 Allowances

- (a) **A Travel Allowance** of \$2,500 paid as a reimbursement to the Scholar (\$1,250 on travel to the Host Location and \$1,250 on return to Australia at the end of the Scholarship Term) to contribute to costs associated with the Scholar's eligible travel to and from the Host Location.
- (b) **An Establishment Allowance** of \$2,500 paid to the Scholar to contribute to the costs associated with the Scholar settling into their Host Location. Fellows (see Section 6.3) will receive an additional payment of \$1,000 (**'Fellows Allowance'**) to purchase study materials for use during their Scholarship. Scholars that are appointed as a Fellow under more than one applicable award will receive a Fellows Allowance of \$1,000 for each position.
- (c) **A Scholarship Allowance** paid to the Scholar as a monthly stipend during the Scholarship Term of up to \$2,500 to contribute to the Scholar's basic living costs in their Host Location.
- (d) **A Mental Health Allowance** of \$1,000 paid to the Scholar as a reimbursement to contribute to the cost of providers of Mental Health Services. The Mental Health Allowance provides reimbursement in relation to the cost of any provider of Mental Health Services, including professionals who are qualified or registered to assist (such as psychologists and social workers) with specific personal issues, such as coping with life changes and fostering mental wellbeing.

5.8.4 Other Scholarship Benefits

Scholars also receive:

5.8.4.1 Insurance

Health and travel insurance while outside of Australia, under an existing policy of cover and subject to certain terms and exclusions (the **'Insurance'**). On a case by case basis, the Scholar may also be considered for, and receive additional insurance cover for, an existing condition that is not typically covered by the standard terms of insurance.

5.8.4.2 Allocation of Case Manager

A dedicated Case Manager from the Support Services Organisation for the duration of their Scholarship Term who provides services including pre-departure briefings, advice on health and travel insurance, advice and assistance relating to accommodation, and payment of Scholarship Benefits.

5.8.4.3 Private Sector Sponsorship

Scholarships may also be sponsored by private sector organisations (i.e. not DFAT or Education).

DFAT has entered into sponsorship agreements with Private Sector Organisations (each a '**Sponsor**') for the provision of in-kind benefits to the NCP. Sponsors are able to associate their brand with the NCP through selected Scholarships, such as the NCP (Business Name) Scholarship for (Location). This is known as a '**Sponsored Scholarship**'. Benefits can be directed to Scholars and may include enhanced Internship packages, training opportunities (such as leadership training) and other benefits. Agreements will be put in place regarding Scholar benefits and obligations under the Sponsored Scholarship.

All Scholars are eligible for Sponsored Scholarships.

In determining Sponsored Scholarships, Sponsors provide DFAT with a set of criteria based on discipline, location, Host Institution/Home University, or other relevant factors. For example, the Sponsored Scholarship may be for top ranked business students studying in Singapore.

Following the selection process set out in Section 8, DFAT will prepare a shortlist of successful Applicants who have accepted the NCP Scholarship, and who meet the criteria for any Sponsored Scholarship. With the consent of the Scholar on the shortlist, DFAT will provide the Scholar's contact details to the relevant Sponsor. Sponsors will contact the Scholars directly, and determine who from the shortlist will be the recipient of the Sponsored Scholarship.

Scholars who have been selected to receive a Sponsored Scholarship will negotiate directly with the Sponsor on the timing of the receipt of any additional benefits – such as training opportunities.

6 The assessment criteria

6.1 Assessment criteria

In addition to meeting the Eligibility Requirements, Applicants will be assessed in accordance with the process set out in Section 8 and on the basis of the following assessment criteria (for both the written Application and further based on the Applicant's performance at interview) ('**Selection Criteria**').

6.1.1 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 (based on Home University grading); and
- (b) 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.

6.1.2 Leadership and engagement 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.

6.1.3 Adaptability and resilience (15 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated ability to adapt to change, thrive in a different environment, and resilience in the face of challenges.

6.1.4 Ability to contribute to NCP Objectives (15 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated understanding of the Objectives, and how the Applicant and their proposed Scholarship Program would contribute to the Objectives.

6.2 Other considerations

Where Applicants have similarly meritorious claims in relation to the Selection Criteria, preference may be given to:

- (a) Applicants proposing:
 - (i) longer periods of Study Components;
 - (ii) an Internship Component or a Mentorship;
 - (iii) a period (or longer periods) of Language Training; and/or
 - (iv) a Scholarship Program with correlation across the proposed Study Component, Language Training and Internship Component;
- (b) achieving diversity of placement across Host Locations;
- (c) representation from diverse student groups including but not limited to, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, students from a Low Socio-economic Status background, students from Regional/Remote areas or universities, students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, students across the Genders, female students in non-traditional fields, or students with a Disability;
- (d) diversity across fields of study and Home Universities; or
- (e) Applications that demonstrate a better achievement of the Objectives.

6.3 Selection of Fellows

Applicants may be appointed as Fellows under the NCP on a merit basis.

The top-ranked Applicant for each Host Location will be acknowledged as a NCP fellow ('**Fellow**').

Subject to the Applicant's agreement, the top-ranked Indigenous Applicant will be acknowledged as the NCP Indigenous Fellow.

DFAT and Education may establish further categories of Fellows at their discretion.

Fellows are encouraged to play a strong leadership role in promoting the NCP while on their Scholarship Program, and as part of the alumni network following completion of their Scholarship Program.

7 How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these Guidelines and the sample Scholarship Agreement.

These documents may be found at [GrantConnect](#). Any alterations and addenda² will be published on GrantConnect and by registering on this website, you will be automatically notified of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for grants information.

² Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for Applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents.

7.1 Overview

Education will contact individuals nominated by Australian Universities by email and provide instructions on how to submit the Application.

To apply you must:

- (a) complete the online application form available from a link provided to you by Education, accessible via <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>;
- (b) provide all the information requested;
- (c) address all Eligibility Requirements and Selection Criteria;
- (d) include all necessary attachments; and
- (e) submit your Application online through <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/> by the Closing Time.

In applying, each Applicant must submit a single Scholarship Program proposal. Multiple proposals will not be considered. An Applicant cannot change their Primary Location in their Application once it has been submitted.

You are responsible for ensuring that your Application is complete and accurate. Applicants should note that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code 1995 \(Cth\)](#). Applications may be excluded from consideration, offers revoked or a Scholarship Program terminated if it is the belief of Education, in consultation with DFAT, that false or misleading information has formed a component of an Application. Further terms relating to the termination or cancellation of a Scholarship are set out in the Scholarship Agreement.

If you find an error in your Application after submitting it, you should contact us immediately via email at ncp.scholarships@education.gov.au. We do not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from you to correct your Application after the Closing Time.

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your Application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your Application after the Closing Time.

You should keep a copy of your Application and any supporting documents.

We will acknowledge that we have received your Application via an automatically generated email once you have submitted your Application on the system.

7.2 Written Applications

The main component of the written Application involves answering questions related to the Selection Criteria. The Application also 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. The Primary Location must be decided at the time of Application.

7.3 Referee reports

Applicants must supply two referee reports when submitting their Application. At least one report must be prepared by an academic referee.

Each referee must:

- (a) be able to comment substantively on the Applicant's abilities and experience with respect to the Selection Criteria; and

- (b) hold a position that gives their comments credibility (e.g. a position in the Applicant's Home University, workplace or community).

Applicants should consider carefully their referees, as their reports should add considerable value to the assessment of an Application against the Selection Criteria.

7.4 Attachments to the Application

Applicants must submit all of the following documentation in addition to a completed Application form:

- (a) evidence of Australian citizenship (copy of birth certificate, current Australian passport or citizenship certificate);
- (b) a letter of current enrolment from their Home University, including expected completion date for the course the overseas study program will be credited towards;
- (c) a current, complete-to-date official Academic Transcript from their Home University;
- (d) the following evidence of affiliation with their Host Institution, which should demonstrate that the Applicant has begun the application process with their proposed Host Institution:
 - (i) if intending to apply for an exchange place for the Study Component under an arrangement in place between the Applicant's Home University and the Host Institution; evidence of the affiliation demonstrated by:
 - (1) a copy of a partnership agreement between the Applicant's Home University and the Host Institution, or a letter from the Applicant's Home University outlining partnership arrangements to allow for Commencement on or between 1 January 2020 and 15 December 2020; and
 - (2) 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 the NCP Scholarship Program and, if successful, would be seeking to undertake a study program at that proposed Host Institution under the relevant exchange place arrangement; or
 - (ii) if intending to apply for a course fee paying position:
 - (1) evidence in the form of correspondence that the Applicant has begun the process of applying with the Host Institution; and
 - (2) confirmation from the Home University that no current exchange agreement is in place between the Host Institution and the Home University (as described in item 1 of the table at Section 5.8.2); and
 - (iii) a letter from the Applicant's Home University faculty, endorsed by the Home University's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships, attesting to the feasibility of the Applicant's proposed Study Component, with reference to the requirements set out in Section 5.2.

Applicants must liaise with their Home University's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships or international office to obtain this evidence.

You should only attach requested documents. DFAT and Education will not consider information in attachments that have not been requested.

7.5 Timing of grant opportunity processes

The table below summaries the indicative key dates and steps in the selection process.

DFAT and Education may amend the timeline at any time by posting a notice on GrantConnect.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Guidelines published on GrantConnect https://www.grants.gov.au/	15 February 2019
Australian Universities nominate students. Nominations must be made via https://ncponline.education.gov.au/ .	17 June – 22 July 2019
Nominations close at 11.30pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST).	22 July 2019
Nominated students receive an invitation to complete an online Application. Applicants complete and submit their Application and supporting documentation.	23 July – 21 August 2019
Applications close at 11.30pm AEST ('Closing Time').	21 August 2019
Applications are shortlisted and shortlisted Applicants are notified.	September 2019
Shortlisted Applicants are interviewed.	September – October 2019
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.	November 2019
Scholars are announced and their details published on the New Colombo Plan Website.	December 2019
Scholars commence their Scholarship.	1 January 2020 – 15 December 2020

7.6 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, please direct them to the NCP Secretariat in writing via ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

The NCP Secretariat will endeavour to respond to emailed questions within three working days. If applicable, answers to questions will be posted on [GrantConnect](#).

DFAT will not respond to any questions received after 5.00pm AEST on 7 August 2019.

8 The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of Applications

Your Application must be submitted by the Closing Time to be considered. We cannot accept late Applications.

We first review your Application against the Eligibility Requirements. Only eligible Applications will move to the next stage. We consider eligible Applications through a competitive process.

A comparison will be made of your Application and performance at interview against the Selection Criteria and against other Applications. Your Application will be considered on its merits, based on:

- (a) how well it meets the Selection Criteria;
- (b) how it compares to other Applications; and
- (c) whether it provides value with relevant money.³

When assessing the extent to which the Application represents value with relevant money, we will have regard to the other considerations in Section 6.2.

8.2 Who will assess Applications and the selection process

Applications will be assessed in accordance with the following stages.

Stage 1: Initial screening

DFAT (or its agent) will be responsible for reviewing Applications to ensure that they comply with the Eligibility Requirements. Applications that do not meet these requirements will be excluded from further assessment.

Stage 2: Detailed assessment of written Applications against Selection Criteria

A panel of external assessors will assess and score Applications on the basis of the Selection Criteria weighting (see Section 6.1) and provide an order of merit to the NCP Secretariat. The panel will comprise individuals with experience in the assessment of Commonwealth grant applications or similar assessment processes managed by Commonwealth government departments.

The NCP Secretariat Delegate (Director NCP Secretariat) will determine which Applications are shortlisted on the basis of the order of merit proposed by the assessment panel and other considerations outlined in Section 6.2.

Stage 3: Interviews

Shortlisted Applicants will be advised that they are shortlisted and invited to attend an interview in accordance with the timetable set out in Section 7.5.

Interview panels will comprise members drawn from the following: senior government officials, private sector, experts on Indo-Pacific affairs, and/or the education sector.

Panels will rank each Applicant as Highly Recommended, Recommended or Not Recommended on the basis of the Selection Criteria and other considerations outlined in Section 6.2. The NCP Secretariat will moderate the panel recommendations and present the findings to the Program Delegate (see Section 8.3) to decide on the award of Scholarships.

8.3 Who will approve the award of Scholarships?

The Program Delegate (the DFAT Deputy Secretary responsible for the NCP Secretariat), or their delegate, will decide on the award of Scholarships to approve taking into account the recommendations of the interview panels and the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program.

³ See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

The Program Delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- (a) the approval of the Scholarship;
- (b) the grant funding amount to be awarded; and
- (c) the terms and conditions of the Scholarship.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a Scholarship.

9 Notification of application outcomes

DFAT and/or Education will advise you of the outcome of your Application via email. If you are successful, we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the Scholarship.

If you are unsuccessful, you can submit a new Application for the same grant (or a similar grant) in any future grant opportunities under the NCP. You should include new or more information to address any weaknesses that may have prevented your previous Application from being successful. Please note that addressing feedback does not guarantee success in a future round.

9.1 Feedback on your Application

There may be a number of reasons why an Application does not progress through the selection process. Please see the New Colombo Plan Website (www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/Scholarship-program/Pages/Scholarship-program.aspx) after the conclusion of the round for the most common reasons why Applications were not successful.

Individual feedback will not be provided to unsuccessful Applicants.

9.2 Offer and acceptance processes

Offers of a Scholarship are subject to Applicants accepting and signing a Scholarship Agreement and being able to satisfy the visa requirements of their Host Location.

10 Successful grant applications

10.1 Scholarship Agreement

A legally binding Scholarship Agreement must be entered into with the Commonwealth before any Scholarship Benefits can be paid to the Scholar or a third party and before the Scholar commences the Scholarship Program.

The Australian Government will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Scholar or a third party in relation to a Scholarship Program before a Scholarship Agreement is entered into.

The Scholarship Agreement will detail the Scholar's responsibilities in relation to the Scholarship Program and the Australian Government's commitment to providing the Scholarship Benefits. The version of the Guidelines in place when you submitted your Application will apply to your Scholarship Program.

Applicants should ensure they have read the sample Scholarship Agreement before submitting their Application.

Your Scholarship Agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate. We will identify these in the Scholarship Agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the Scholarship Agreement.

10.2 Variations to Scholarship Programs

At any time after being notified they are successful, Scholars may apply to vary their Scholarship Program to:

- (a) incorporate a new Internship or Mentorship opportunity;
- (b) increase the duration of the Study Components, Language Training or Internship Component; or
- (c) change any other aspect of their Scholarship Program where exceptional circumstances prevent them from completing the Scholarship Program as initially proposed.

Any request for a variation must be made by way of a Program Variation Request Form provided by their Case Manager, at least one month in advance of the proposed variation commencing, or such shorter period as required by the circumstances.

The decision to approve a variation to a Scholarship Program will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Support Services Organisation or by DFAT, in its sole and absolute discretion. Without limitation, DFAT may consider:

- (a) the merits of the request (and funding being available if required) in respect of achieving the Objectives;
- (b) demonstrated coherence across the Study Components, and any Language Training and Internship Components of the Scholarship Program; and
- (c) ensuring that the Scholarship Program remains consistent with the Eligibility Requirements.

Scholars will be liable for any financial commitments made by them in relation to their proposed change of Scholarship Program where those commitments are made before receiving formal advice granting the Scholarship Program variation.

10.3 Specific legislation and policies

Scholars are required to be compliant with all relevant laws and regulations, in Australia as well as in Host Locations once on Scholarship. This includes compliance with policies in relation to child protection.

DFAT has a zero tolerance approach to child exploitation or abuse and is committed to promoting the interests and safety of children at all times. Scholars must comply with the Support Services Organisation's Child Protection Policy, which will set out expectations in relation to appropriate behaviours and reporting requirements for Scholars.

10.4 How we pay the grant

The Scholarship Agreement sets out the times and manner in which Scholarship Benefits will be provided to Scholars.

Certain Scholarship Benefits will be paid to the Scholar directly. Other Scholarship Benefits, such as Tuition Fees, will be paid directly to the Host Institution or Language Training Provider, as relevant.

Applicants should refer to the sample Scholarship Agreement for further information.

10.5 Taxation

Grant payments provided to Scholars should be exempt from income tax in accordance with item 2.1A of the table in section 51-10 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* (Cth). We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#).⁴ DFAT and Education are not able to provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

11 Announcement of grants

DFAT and Education may make public details of individual Scholarships and Scholars, including, but not limited to:

- (a) the names of successful Scholars, their Home University, Host Location(s), Host Institution, Host Organisation and Language Training Provider;
- (b) a brief description of the Scholarship Program being supported (and timing);
- (c) the amount of funding awarded; and
- (d) photographs of successful Applicants taken at the award ceremony.

12 How we monitor your grant activity

The requirements and expectations for the monitoring of your Scholarship are set out in the Scholarship Agreement.

12.1 Keeping us informed

You should let the Support Services Organisation know if anything is likely to affect your ability to undertake your Scholarship Program, in accordance with the Scholarship Agreement.

12.2 Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the Scholarship Agreement.

12.3 Evaluation

NCP Scholarship Program reporting and evaluation are ongoing activities within the Government. As such, DFAT, Education, and the Support Services Organisation can use any information collected for performance monitoring and management of the NCP.

The Support Services Organisation, Education and DFAT will conduct performance monitoring and management online through: <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>. Information about Applicants, Program outcomes and performance (including reports) will also be collected.

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

NCP Scholar alumni are also expected to participate in ongoing surveys and other program monitoring and evaluation activities after completion of their Scholarship Program, as required by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

⁴ <https://www.ato.gov.au/>.

13 Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

These Guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by DFAT. When this happens, the revised Guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

13.1 Complaints and feedback

In relation to feedback on your Application, see Section 9.1.

Inquiries and complaints in relation to the processing and selection of Applications should be sent to ncp.scholarships@education.gov.au.

If an Applicant, or any other person, is dissatisfied with the administration of the NCP Scholarship Program they can raise their concerns with the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will generally prefer that the Departments (DFAT and Education) be given an opportunity to deal with the complaint in the first instance.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: www.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.

13.2 Further information

For further information on NCP Scholarship Program administrative matters, including eligibility for the NCP Scholarship Program, Applications and funding arrangements please contact Education at ncp.scholarships@education.gov.au.

For other matters including business liaison, Internships, Mentorships, public diplomacy and alumni, DFAT can be contacted through ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

13.3 Conflicts of Interest

An Australian University that makes a nomination 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 such steps as reasonably required by DFAT or Education to resolve or otherwise deal with any Conflict of Interest.

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 such steps as DFAT or Education reasonably require to resolve or otherwise deal with any Conflict of Interest. Obligations for the management of Conflicts of Interest by Scholars are set out in the Declaration of Acceptance.

13.4 Privacy

DFAT and Education and their contractors are bound by the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) ('**Privacy Act**'), including the Australian Privacy Principles ('**APPs**'), which prescribe rules for the handling of Personal Information.

Personal Information is collected by DFAT and Education (including from Home Universities and other third parties) in relation to Applications under the NCP. In addition to uses permitted under the Privacy Act, the information collected may be used by DFAT and Education for the purpose of administering the NCP, including the following purposes:

- (a) assessing Applications;
- (b) administering and performance monitoring of the NCP;
- (c) promoting the NCP, including to Scholarship recipients and to media representatives and in promotional material, information and publications in hardcopy and/or on the internet; and
- (d) congratulating and/or inviting successful Applicants/Scholars to functions and events held in Australia or overseas, before, during or after the Scholarship Term.

DFAT and Education may also disclose Personal Information in relation to Applications under the NCP Scholarship Program for the purposes listed above, including:

- (a) to other Australian Government departments and agencies, including Austrade, the Department of Home Affairs, the Australian Federal Police and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet;
- (b) to State and Territory Governments;
- (c) to Australian Parliamentary members and committees of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia;
- (d) to contractors and agents of DFAT and Education;
- (e) to Australian Universities, including to the NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships;
- (f) to potential Internship/Mentorship Host Organisations, Language Training Providers, Host Location governments/authorities or non-government organisations. These may be foreign organisations (noting that they may not be bound by Australian privacy legislation or equivalent privacy legislation in their own countries);
- (g) to Scholarship sponsors, including but not limited to companies or professional bodies;
- (h) to media representatives, including foreign media representatives; and
- (i) in publicly available promotional material, information and publications in hardcopy and/or on the internet.

For more information on privacy, including handling of Personal Information, accessing or correcting Personal Information, or how to make a complaint, Applicants should go to:

- (a) Department of Education and Training - www.education.gov.au/privacy or contact privacy@education.gov.au; and/or

- (b) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – www.dfat.gov.au/privacy.html or contact privacy@dfat.gov.au.

13.5 Confidential Information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any Confidential Information relating to the Application and/or Scholarship Agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our Confidential Information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the Scholarship Agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

- (a) you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential;
- (b) the information is commercially sensitive; and
- (c) revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- (a) Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the NCP Scholarship Program effectively;
- (b) employees and contractors of DFAT or Education for the purpose of research, assessment, monitoring and analysing the NCP Scholarship Program;
- (c) employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery;
- (d) 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;
- (e) other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in NCP Scholarship Program reports and consultations;
- (f) the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner;
- (g) the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary; or
- (h) a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The Scholarship Agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the Scholarship Agreement.

13.6 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) ('FOI Act').

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All freedom of information requests must be made to the Freedom of Information Coordinator at DFAT immediately via email at foi@dfat.gov.au. DFAT will consult Education on FOI requests as required.

14 Glossary

Term	Definition
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which they live, or formerly lived.
Academic Transcript	an official document issued by the Home University as a record of all completed units and results throughout the student's enrolment.
Academic Year	the annual period of study sessions of a Home University and/or Host Institution.
Administering Entity	when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes.
Applicant	a person who is applying or has applied for a Scholarship.
Application	an application for a Scholarship under the NCP Scholarship Program.
Australian Qualifications Framework	is available at: https://www.aqf.edu.au/ .
Australian University	a registered higher education provider for the purposes of the <i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</i> (Cth) that is registered in a provider category that permits the use of the word 'university'.
Bachelor Degree	undergraduate studies at a Bachelor Level 7 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.
Bachelor Honours Degree	undergraduate studies at a Bachelor Honours Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.
Case Manager	a staff member of the Support Services Organisation who is assigned to a particular Scholar and who is responsible for providing the Scholar with information and support services to undertake their Scholarship Program.
Closing Time	the date and time specified as such in the timeline at Section 7.5, beyond which Applications will not be accepted.
Commencement	the date in the Application that the Scholar is required to commence their Scholarship Program.

Term	Definition
Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)	establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
Concurrent Diploma	undergraduate studies at a diploma level as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework, undertaken concurrently with a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree.
Confidential Information	information which satisfies the three criteria listed at Section 13.5 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 NCP Scholarship Program.
Declaration of Acceptance	is provided online via: https://ncponline.education.gov.au/ .
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.
Eligibility Requirements	the requirements for: (a) a Scholarship Program to be eligible for the NCP Scholarship Program as described in Section 5.1; and (b) an Applicant to be eligible for the NCP Scholarship Program as described in Section 4.1.
Establishment Allowance	has the meaning in Section 5.8.3(b).
Fellow	has the meaning in Section 6.3.
Fellows Allowance	has the meaning in Section 5.8.3(b).
Full Time	for each of the Study Component, Internship Component and Language Training the requirements set out in the Eligibility Requirements.
Gender	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).

Term	Definition
grant	<p>for the purposes of the CGRGs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <p>(a) under which relevant money⁵ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money⁶ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and</p> <p>(b) which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.</p>
grant program	<p>a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a PBS Program.</p>
GrantConnect	<p>is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs.</p>
Guidelines	<p>these NCP Scholarship Program guidelines, as amended from time to time.</p>
Home University	<p>the Australian University in which an Applicant or Scholar (as the case requires) is enrolled while Applying for or undertaking their Scholarship Program and will confer the student's degree upon completion.</p>
Host Institution	<p>a university or other education provider in which the Scholar undertakes their Study Component in the Host Location.</p>
Host Location	<p>the eligible geographic location in the Indo-Pacific region set out in Section 5.5 to which the Scholar will travel to undertake their Scholarship Program.</p>
Host Organisation	<p>the organisation in which the Scholar undertakes an Internship or Mentorship in the Host Location.</p>
Insurance	<p>has the meaning in Section 5.8.4.</p>
Internship	<p>a professional work experience in which a Scholar has learning goals relevant to their academic qualification and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies.</p>

⁵ Relevant money is defined in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* ('PGPA Act'). See section 8, Dictionary.

⁶ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Term	Definition
Internship Component	an Internship to be undertaken as part of a Scholarship Program that meets the Eligibility Requirements in Section 5.3.1.
Language Training	training in a language to be undertaken as part of a Scholarship Program that meets the Eligibility Requirements in Section 5.4.
Language Training Provider	a provider of language training at which the Scholar undertakes their Language Training in the Host Location.
Low Socio-economic Status	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.
Mental Health Allowance	has the meaning in Section 5.8.3(d).
Mental Health Service	professional counselling to foster a state of well-being, in which the Scholar realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.
Mentorship	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 (NCP)	the NCP Scholarship Program and the NCP Mobility Program.
New Colombo Plan (NCP) Liaison Officer for Scholarships	the person(s) designated by each Australian University to submit student nominations and receive Program updates.
New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program	the program of that name administered by DFAT.
New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program	has the meaning in Section 1.1.
New Colombo Plan Website	www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan.aspx .
Objectives	has the meaning in Section 2.2.
PBS Program	described within the entity's Portfolio Budget Statement , PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.

Term	Definition
Permitted Gap	has the meaning in Section 5.6.
Personal Information	has the same meaning as in the Privacy Act.
Primary Location	has the meaning in Section 5.5.2.
Privacy Act	the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth).
Private Sector Organisation	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	the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program.
Regional/Remote	a region designated as Regional or Remote by the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).
Scholar	a successful Applicant who receives a Scholarship.
Scholarship	a scholarship under the NCP Scholarship Program, and includes the relevant Scholarship Benefits provided to the Scholar under the NCP Scholarship Program.
Scholarship Agreement	the agreement to be entered into between the Commonwealth and the Scholar prior to the start of the Scholarship Program, in substantially the form of the example provided on the New Colombo Plan Website.
Scholarship Allowance	has the meaning in Section 5.8.3(c).
Scholarship Benefits	the Travel Allowance, the Establishment Allowance, the Fellows Allowance (if applicable), the Scholarship Allowance, the Tuition Fees (if applicable), the Mental Health Allowance and the Insurance as described in Section 5.8 or any part thereof, and any other financial or other assistance that may be available to a Scholar based on the individual circumstances of a Scholar's Scholarship Program, including as provided by Private Sector Organisations.
Scholarship Program	the Study Component, Internship Component, Mentorship activities and Language Training that Applicants propose in their Application (subject to any approved variations under the Scholarship Agreement in accordance with the process in Section 10.2). The duration of the Scholarship Program is the Scholarship Term.

Term	Definition
Scholarship Program Completion Date	is the date in the Application by which the Scholar is required to complete the Scholarship Program or such other later date in accordance with the Scholarship Agreement.
Scholarship Term	the term of a Scholarship Program starting from Commencement and ending on the Scholarship Program Completion Date.
Secondary Location	has the meaning in Section 5.5.3.
Selection Criteria	the specified principles or standards, against which Applications will be judged and are set out in Section 6.
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.
Study Component	an approved course of study at a Host Institution as part of a Scholar's Scholarship Program that meets the Eligibility Requirements in Section 5.2.
Support Services Organisation	a third party provider(s) contracted by the Commonwealth of Australia to manage support services for Scholars or provide other services in relation to the NCP Scholarship Program.
Travel Allowance	has the meaning in Section 5.8.3(a).
Tuition Fees	the monetary contribution available towards a Scholar's tuition fees for a Study Component and Language Training (if any) as set out in Section 5.8.2.
value with money	<p>value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the quality of the project proposal and activities; (b) fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives; (c) that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved; and (d) the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.



Australian Government



NEW COLOMBO PLAN

Connect to Australia's future - study in the region

New Colombo Plan Guidelines Scholarship Program

2019 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 2019 round of the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program (“The Program”), and the conditions of the 2019 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 12 February 2018 and will be published on GrantConnect on that date.

The Program will be undertaken according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)* <http://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-guidelines-July2014.pdf>

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 New Colombo Plan 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 (‘the Scholarship Program’) objectives in 2019 are to:

- provide up to 120 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 2018-19 is outlined below.

2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
\$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 2019 and 15 December 2019. 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, paid gap leave may be approved on a case-by-case basis up to a total of four weeks per every 12 months (pro rata).

Applicants who have already commenced or will commence a study abroad or exchange program overseas prior to 1 January 2019 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.

¹ As outlined in the 2017-2018 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.

- Favourable consideration during the selection process will be given to applicants seeking longer-term study and Language Training.

Internship/Mentorship Component

- 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, practicums or artist residencies.
- 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, although 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 (see Section 3.2).

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. The training must be undertaken in the same Host Location as the Study Program or Internship.
- Language Training may be undertaken either full-time or part-time concurrently with full-time study or a full-time Internship.
- To qualify as full-time, Language Training must be undertaken for a minimum of 15 contact hours per week and delivered formally by a designated training provider.
- A maximum of six months of stipend will be provided for full-time Language Training.
- Scholars are encouraged to seek academic credit for their Language Training, but this is not mandatory.
- Language Training alone cannot constitute a Scholarship Program.

Where relevant, Scholars are encouraged to undertake part-time Language Training as part of or concurrent to other full-time Program components.

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 and its goals, including promoting 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. Any money a Scholar receives for the purpose of the Scholarship Program must only be used for the purpose of the Scholarship. The money must not be used for any other purpose.

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.
- tuition fees to cover the cost of Language Training, , for up to six months up to a maximum of \$10,000 for Scholars studying as fee-paying international students (or \$6,666 per trimester). These fees are only for in-country Language Training, and must be for an official language of the Host Country and are payable directly to the Language Training provider.
- Scholars undertaking less than one month of full-time Language Training or part-time Language Training concurrent with another full-time program component, may have Language Training tuition fees paid up to a maximum of \$1,500.
- the combined cost of semester tuition fees and Language Training tuition fees must not exceed the \$20,000 (\$10,000 per semester or \$6,666 per trimester) mentioned above.
- 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 2019.
- be undertaking at least one 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 ability 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 leadership 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 longer periods of Language Training;
- diversity across Host Locations;
- demonstrated correlation across the proposed study, language and internship components;
- 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 from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, 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
12 February 2018	Program guidelines published on GrantConnect https://www.grants.gov.au/
1 July – 31 July 2018	Australian Universities nominate applicants. Nominations close 11.30pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 31 July 2018. Nominations must be made via the New Colombo Plan Online website.
1 August – 30 August 2018	Nominated students receive application guidance and an invitation to complete an online application form.

	Applicants complete their application and gather supporting documentation.
30 August 2018	Applications close at 11.59pm AEST.
September 2018	Applications are shortlisted and shortlisted applicants are notified.
September – October 2018	Shortlisted applicants are interviewed.
November 2018	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 2018	Scholars are announced and their details are published on the New Colombo Plan website.
1 January – 15 December 2019	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 will conduct an internal process to nominate up to 10 students (nominees should not be ranked). 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)
- equity group (if relevant)

- confirmation that a police check has been conducted for the purpose of the Scholarship application. An adverse criminal record must be communicated to the NCP Secretariat by the nominating university.

The Australian University must ensure it has an appropriate policy in place relating to the handling of personal information, and has obtained the applicant's express consent to deal with and provide the applicant's personal information to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training for the purposes of the New Colombo Plan Scholarships Program.

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 2019 and 15 December 2019 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 2018 and an interview will be scheduled during September and October 2018. 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 2018.

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 nominees will be required to undergo a police check prior to submitting their application. 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 advice, 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 approve a variation to 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. An important consideration in assessing variation requests will be demonstrated coherence across the study, Language Training and Internship components of a Scholar's Program. Scholars will be liable for any financial commitments made in relation to their proposed extended study or proposed change of Program components where those commitments were made prior to receipt of formal advice granting the Program variation.

The decision to approve a variation to the Program from an exchange arrangement to fee-paying tuition will be made on a case-by-case basis.

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 2019 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 that their nominated applicants have received Australian Government guidance on the application process. Australian Universities must also confirm that the nominees' proposed study programs are credit-bearing. Australian Universities are requested to assist nominees to obtain the required evidence of acceptance by Host Institutions and encouraged to support applicants to arrange Internships/Mentorships and Language Training.

Australian Universities are requested to nominate a New Colombo Plan Liaison Officer for Scholarships (and an alternative contact, where possible) who will 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.

In line with 3.2, Australian Universities must undertake risk assessments of Host Locations proposed by applicants.

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 and Language Training.

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 such 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.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Training do not provide individual feedback to unsuccessful applicants or interviewees.

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, Language Training 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 Home Affairs, the Australian Federal Police and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- State and Territory Governments
- Australian Parliamentary members and committees of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia
- 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).
- Australian Parliamentary members and committees 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 while undertaking their Scholarship Program 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.

Language Training means in-country training in a language that is an official language of the host location.

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.



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.



New Colombo Plan Guidelines Scholarship Program

2017 Round

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1 Program Overview

1.1 Purpose of Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to outline the process for selecting Australian undergraduate students for the 2017 round of the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program, and the provisions of the 2017 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 12 January 2016.

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. 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.

Specifically, in 2017 the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program objectives are to:

- provide around 100 prestigious and highly-competitive Scholarships
- support more study experiences in as many Indo-Pacific locations as possible
- 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 2016-17 is outlined below.

2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Total
\$28,215,000	\$51,083,000	\$50,933,000	\$130,231,000

1.3 The New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program

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 2017 and 31 December 2017. 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 one month 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 2017 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.
- In keeping with the specific objectives of the New Colombo Plan in 2017, favourable consideration during the selection process will be given to applicants seeking longer-term study.

¹ As outlined in the 2015-16 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.

Internship/Mentorship component

- An Internship is a 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.
- 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 (22 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 undertaken non-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 on a part-time basis concurrent with full-time study or a full-time Internship.

In keeping with the specific objectives of the New Colombo Plan in 2017, 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 participate in activities that 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. The activities will aim to encourage others to participate in the New Colombo Plan and advocate for the New Colombo Plan, as well as 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) will receive an additional benefit of \$1,000 to purchase study materials for use during their Scholarship Program.

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 2017.
- 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.
- 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 38 Indo-Pacific Host Locations: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, 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.

A maximum of around 15 Scholarships will be awarded for any single Host Location.

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). Such a program is also 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 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. 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. Where applicants have similarly meritorious claims, consideration will also be given to the following:

- diversity across Host Locations: a maximum of around 15 Scholarships will be awarded for study in any single Host Location. Subject to the quality of applications, some Host Locations may receive no Scholars.
- representation from diverse student groups including: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from a Low Socio-Economic Status, students from regional/remote areas, 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
January 2016	Program guidelines published.
1 July – 29 July 2016	Australian Universities nominate applicants. Nominations close 11.59pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 29 July 2016. Nominations must be made via the New Colombo Plan Online website.
1 August – 31 August 2016	Nominated students receive application guidance and an invitation to complete an online application form. Applicants complete their application and gather supporting documentation.
31 August 2016	Applications close at 11.59pm AEST.
September 2016	Applications are shortlisted and shortlisted applicants are notified.
September - October 2016	Shortlisted applicants are interviewed.
November 2016	Selections are finalised and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Tourism and International Education are notified of selection outcomes. All successful and unsuccessful applicants are notified of the outcome of their application.
December 2016	Scholars are announced and their details are published on the New Colombo Plan website.
1 January – 31 December 2017	Successful Scholars leave for their Scholarship Program.

5.1 Nominations

Students must be nominated by their Home University in order to apply. 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 2017 and 31 December 2017
 - 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 2016 and an interview will be scheduled during September and October 2016. 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 Tourism and International Education 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 2016.

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
- 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.

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 2017 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. 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, 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, 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.
- 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).
- 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 to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade via email at foi@dfat.gov.au. As required, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will consult the Department of Education and Training on FOI requests.

11 Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is an ongoing activity 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. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade can be contacted at 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 is defined as a supplier listed under Table A or Table B of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cth).

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

Bachelor Honours Degree means undergraduate studies at a Bachelor Honours level 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 of the Scholarship Program 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 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).

HECS-HELP means the HECS-HELP scheme administered under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cth). Further information is available at <http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/helppayingmyfees/hecs-help/pages/hecs-help-welcome>

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 (SES) means a low scoring area in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) 2011 Index of Education and Occupation (IEO) measured at Statistical Area 1 (SA1) level or postcode level. Further information is available at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2033.0.55.0012011?OpenDocument>

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).

Program means the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program.

Program Delegate means a Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade or a Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education and Training in their role as co-chairs of the Program Implementation Group.

Program Implementation Group is the group of officials, co-chaired by the Program Delegates, which oversees implementation of the New Colombo Plan.

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 the successful applicants under the Program.

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

Study Period means a period of study as defined by the Host Institution, e.g. semester or trimester.

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

Women in non-traditional fields means female students undertaking studies in the following broad Fields of Education: Natural and Physical Sciences; Information Technology; Engineering and Related Technologies; Architecture and Building; Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies; Management and Commerce; and the narrow Field of Education Economics and Econometrics, as defined in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED), 2001.



New Colombo Plan Guidelines Scholarship Program

2016 Round

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1 Program Overview

1.1 Purpose of Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to outline the process for selecting Australian undergraduate students for the 2016 round of the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with any Frequently Asked Questions available on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website at www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan.

These guidelines commence on 23 March 2015.

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 Australian undergraduates to study and undertake Internships in the region.

The Australian Government is committing more than AU¹\$100 million of funding for the New Colombo Plan between 2013-2014 and 2017-2018. It involves a prestigious Scholarship Program for study of up to one Academic Year and Internships 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
- increase the number of work-ready Australian graduates with regional experience

Specifically, in 2016 the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program objectives are to:

- provide around 100 prestigious and highly-competitive Scholarships
- support increased study experiences in as many Indo-Pacific locations as possible
- encourage a substantial number of New Colombo Plan students to undertake longer-term study, language study and an Internship or Mentorship
- engage New Colombo Plan students, universities and other stakeholders in public diplomacy and outreach
- continue to develop an active alumni community that provides the opportunity for participants to share their experiences, promote the New Colombo Plan and continue to develop knowledge of and professional links within the Indo-Pacific region

¹ All figures are in Australian dollars.

1.2.2 New Colombo Plan Budget²

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Total
27,817,000	28,215,000	51,083,000	51,083,000	158,198,000

1.3 The New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program

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

The maximum duration of a Scholarship Program is 17 months. All program components must be completed within this time period.

Study component

The study component is a mandatory component of the Scholarship Program and must meet the following conditions:

- The study component must be full-time and face-to-face (not online) for at least one Study Period (as defined by the Host Institution), and up to one full Academic Year in duration.
- Scholars must receive full credit for their study program towards a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree at their Home University.
- Applicants may propose overseas study that will provide whole or partial credit towards a Concurrent Diploma but only in cases where the diploma is relevant / complementary (e.g. diploma in a relevant language) to the concurrent degree program.
- Scholars studying a research based honours program overseas must be supervised by an academic from their Host Institution and will be required to demonstrate in their application the benefits of undertaking their research program at their chosen Host Location.

Favourable consideration during the selection process will be given to those applicants seeking longer-term (i.e. full Academic Year) study.

Internship/Mentorship component

An Internship/Mentorship component is strongly encouraged, where Host Location visa requirements permit this.

- Internships may be undertaken on a part-time basis concurrent with study at a Host Institution and/or on a full-time basis (for a maximum of six months) prior or subsequent to study at a Host Institution.
- If a full-time Internship is undertaken prior or subsequent to study, the stipend (see Section 2) will be paid for the duration of the Internship.

² Covers all aspects of the New Colombo Plan administration, including mobility program funding. The budget does not include funding for capital expenses.

- 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 on a part-time basis concurrent with full-time study.

Favourable consideration during the selection process will be given to those applicants proposing to undertake an Internship and/or Mentorship.

Language training

All Scholars are eligible for support to undertake language training as part of their Scholarship Program.

- The training must be in a language that is applicable to the Host Location or the Scholar's course of study. The training should be undertaken in the same Host Location as the study program.
- In addition to a language training fee, a maximum of one month of stipend will be provided if the training is taken as an intensive program separate to either the study program or an Internship component.

Where relevant, favourable consideration during the selection process will be given to those applicants seeking language training.

Community engagement and advocacy

Scholars are encouraged to participate in activities (including through engagement with the New Colombo Plan Secretariat in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) that share the experiences of their Scholarship Program with other students and their community. The activities will aim to encourage other potential New Colombo Plan participants and advocate for the New Colombo Plan and the benefits of studying and undertaking work placements in the region.

2 Scholarship Benefits

A Scholarship will provide Scholars with:

- a travel allowance of \$2,500
- an establishment allowance of \$2,500
- a monthly stipend of \$2,500
- 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.

Where incurred, payment of in-country language training fees up to \$1,000 will be made directly to the language-training provider.

Where a Scholar will be studying abroad as a fee paying international student the Scholarship will provide:

- Payment of up to one Academic Year's international tuition fees to a maximum of \$15,000 (\$7,500 per semester based or \$5,000 per trimester-based Study Period); payable directly to the Host Institution (includes student service and amenities fees).

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.

If the Scholar's study abroad is under the auspices of an exchange program and the Host Institution does not charge tuition fees, the allocation for tuition fees will not be provided.

In addition to the benefits outlined above, New Colombo Plan Fellows will be awarded \$1,000 to purchase study or learning materials for use during their Scholarship Program.

3 Eligibility

3.1 Applicants

Applicants must:

- be an Australian citizen. Applicants can not undertake their Scholarship in a Host Location in which they have dual citizenship or residency rights; or in which they have previously been a citizen or permanent resident
- be enrolled in an on-shore campus of an Australian University at the time of application
- be aged from 18 to 28 (inclusive) as at 1 January in the year of the commencement of their Scholarship Program
- be undertaking a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree, at the commencement of the Scholarship Program
- have achieved a minimum 70 per cent graded average or equivalent for their undergraduate course to date
- not be undertaking another Australian Government-funded off-shore scholarship at the commencement of, or concurrently with, the Scholarship Program
- not be a previous recipient of a New Colombo Plan Scholarship.

Additionally, the applicant's proposed Scholarship Program must:

- be full-time. Students who are studying part-time in Australia are eligible to apply for a Scholarship if they meet other eligibility requirements as set out in Section 3.
- commence between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2016. Applicants who have already commenced or will commence a study abroad or exchange program overseas prior to 1 January 2016 are not eligible to apply for a Scholarship to continue that study.

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

3.2 Host Locations

Scholarship Programs can be conducted in the following 38 eligible Indo-Pacific Host Locations: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burma, Cambodia, China, Cook

Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Nauru, Nepal, 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 in 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. the travel allowance and the establishment allowance will be paid once only to a Scholar). Such a program would also be 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 for New Colombo Plan funding, but applicants should think seriously about the need to travel to that Host Location or region before deciding whether to apply. 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 be undertaken at a local Host Institution. Host Institutions should not be offshore campuses of a third country. On a trial basis, study is eligible at offshore campuses of Australian Universities 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

The following are the selection criteria against which applicants will be assessed, including their relative weighting. Applicants should address each criterion and limit their responses to 300 words per criterion. Applicants should use the guidance in the square brackets to inform their response.

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

[Note: The assessment of this criterion will relate to the applicant's graded average achieved in tertiary studies, and to ungraded academic achievements, including

academic awards and commendations, at the tertiary level. The assessment will also relate to evidence of excellence demonstrated through referee reports. The interview panel will also consider the applicant's communication skills, higher-order cognitive and critical thinking skills, and engagement in learning.]

2. Demonstrated leadership in the community (30 per cent weighting)

[Note: 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 in their university.]

3. Ability to adapt and operate in new or changing environments and understanding of how the proposed Scholarship Program will enhance cultural awareness (15 per cent weighting)

[Note: Assessment of this criterion will relate to the applicant's potential to undertake successfully, and gain maximum advantage from, a study experience in an Indo-Pacific location.]

4. Ability to contribute to New Colombo Plan goals through the Scholarship Program (15 per cent weighting)

[Note: Assessment of this criterion will relate to the depth of applicant's understanding of New Colombo Plan goals, and how their proposed Scholarship Program would contribute to their own future goals and the goals of the New Colombo Plan.]

4.2 Selection of New Colombo Plan Fellows

For each Host Location within the Indo-Pacific, the top-ranked candidate for each location will be acknowledged as a New Colombo Plan Fellow.

4.3 Other Considerations

Where applicants have similarly meritorious claims in relation to the selection criteria, preference may be given to applicants seeking two semesters of study and/or an Internship/Mentorship and/or language training, and applicants whose inclusion will promote:

- diversity across Host Locations, fields of study, Home Universities
- opportunities for students who have not previously received an Australian Government funded offshore scholarship
- representation from diverse student groups (including, but not limited to, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from a Low Socio-Economic Status, students from regional/remote areas, students across the genders, female students in non-traditional fields, students with disabilities or students from a non-English speaking background).

5 Selection process

5.1 Timeline

The table below summarises key dates and steps for the selection process.

Timeline	Activity
March 2015	Program guidelines published
1 July – 31 July 2015	Australian Universities nominate applicants via the New Colombo Plan Online website
3 August – 31 August 2015	Nominated students receive application guidance and an invitation to complete an online application form. Applicants complete their application and gather supporting documentation
31 August 2015	Applications close at 11.59pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST)
September 2015	Applications are shortlisted and shortlisted applicants are notified
September – October 2015	Shortlisted applicants are interviewed
November 2015	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 2015	Details of successful Scholars published on website, as per Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines requirements
1 January – 31 December 2016	Successful Scholars leave for their Scholarship Program

5.2 Nominations for Scholarships

Students must be nominated by their Home University in order to apply. Each Australian University is asked to conduct an internal process to nominate up to 10 students to apply for the 2016 round of the Program.

Australian Universities should make nominations accessible to all eligible students enrolled at that university.

Issues to Consider

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

To encourage diversity in Host Locations, a maximum of around 15 Scholarships is expected to be awarded for study in any single Host Location. Subject to the diversity of applicants and subsequent selection processes, some Host Locations may receive no Scholars.

Submission of Nominations

Nominations must be submitted through the New Colombo Plan Online website. 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
- mobile phone
- degree in which the nominee is enrolled
- academic transcript
- intended Host Location (where known).

5.3 Applications for Scholarships

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

The application requires applicants to provide details of their proposed Scholarship Program (including the mandatory study component, and the Internship/Mentorship and language training components, where applicable) and the Host Location in which they intend to complete their Scholarship Program (an applicant cannot change their Host Location once their application has been submitted). The application form also requires applicants to respond to the four selection criteria (see Section 4.1).

Applicants should be aware that giving false or misleading information to the Australian Government is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth).

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.

5.3.1 Referee Reports

Applicants must provide two referee reports when submitting their application. Referee reports must be from academic supervisors or tutors, lecturers, course convenors, or workplace supervisors (including volunteer work) who should be familiar with the applicant's recent tertiary academic and/or work performance and abilities. At least one report must be prepared by an academic referee.

Applicants should exercise due consideration when selecting referees as their report may add considerable value to their application through both the shortlisting and interview assessment processes.

5.3.2 Supporting Documents

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

- evidence of Australian citizenship (certified copy of birth certificate, current passport or citizenship certificate)
- evidence of current enrolment at their Home University
- a current, complete-to-date Academic Transcript from their Home University
- evidence of affiliation with their Host Institution(s).

Evidence of affiliation could be:

- a copy of a partnership agreement between the applicant's Home University and the Host Institution
- a letter from the applicant's Home University (on the Home University's letterhead) outlining partnership arrangements to allow for commencement between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2016
- an email or letter from the applicant or the applicant's Home University to the proposed Host Institution(s) 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.

5.4 Selection Process

Following the close of applications, Scholars will be 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. All 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 declaration to cover issues associated with Conflicts of Interest.

Shortlisted applicants will be advised in September 2015 and an interview will be scheduled during September-October 2015. Interview panels may comprise senior government officials, members of the business community, academics, or other appropriate individuals.

The Program Delegate/s 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 notification of successful and unsuccessful applicants.

5.5 Acceptance process

All successful and unsuccessful applicants will be advised of the outcome of their applications by the end of November 2015.

Offer of Scholarships

Applicants who are offered a Scholarship must agree to the terms and conditions of their Scholarship and accept their Scholarship online within the prescribed time. Those applicants

who are offered a Scholarship must be able to satisfy all the visa requirements of the Host Location(s) in which they wish to undertake their Scholarship Program.

Police Checks

All Scholars will be required to undergo a police check before their Scholarship is confirmed. It is an important consideration of the Australian Government that a Scholar is a suitable person who 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 which the Department of Education and Training, in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, considers in its complete discretion may harm the reputation of the New Colombo Plan, then the Department of Education and Training, in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, may refuse to grant or may revoke a Scholarship.

Support Services Organisation

Successful applicants will be allocated to a contracted Support Services Organisation. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a scholarship agreement with the Support Services Organisation.

6 Scholarship Agreement

A scholarship agreement between the Scholar and the Support Services Organisation must be executed before the Scholarship can be paid to the Scholar. If the Scholarship Program is commenced before the scholarship agreement is executed, the Australian Government will not be liable for any expenditure incurred before the date of execution of the scholarship agreement.

The scholarship agreement will detail the successful applicant's responsibilities in relation to the Scholarship Program and outcomes that need to 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
- pre-departure advice and assistance
- assistance regarding return arrangements to Australia
- travel and health insurance
- confirmation of Internships/Mentorships
- minimum monthly contact.

All pre-departure requirements outlined in the scholarship agreement, including the provision of evidence of acceptance at the Host Institution, must be completed before successful applicants receive their Scholarship benefits.

6.1 Variation of Scholarship Agreement

New Colombo Plan Scholarship recipients may wish to vary their scholarship agreement for a number of reasons including to incorporate an Internship/Mentorship opportunity not identified at the time of acceptance, or to study for two Study Periods when the original study plan was to complete one Study Period.

Any request for a variation must be made in writing to the Support Services Organisation well in advance of the proposed variation commencing.

The decision to extend a Scholarship Program will be made on a case by case basis by the New Colombo Plan Secretariat and Department of Education and Training with agreement contingent on the merits of the request and funding being available. 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 together administer this Program.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for taking the 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 administration of online systems, and is the first point of contact for students and New Colombo Plan Liaison Officers for Scholarships 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.

Neither the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade or the Department of Education and Training will arrange work placements or study programs, including accommodation in the Host Location, nor direct Host Institutions, Host Organisations, or Scholars about the manner in which work placements and study programs are carried out. Such matters are for Home Universities, Host Institutions, Host Organisations and Scholars to determine.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade does not have a contractual, direct financial or supervisory relationship, with any Scholars.

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 2016 round. It is the responsibility of Australian Universities to seek and receive appropriate consents 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 will need to provide consent for their name and contact details to be published on the Program 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 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.

7.3 Applicants

Applicants must meet all eligibility criteria set out in these guidelines and be nominated by their Home University. 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 in 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/resources/Pages/liaison-officers.aspx. It is the applicant's responsibility to arrange and (if successful) confirm any Internship/Mentorship.

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 (including supporting documentation and referee reports) received after the closing date will not be considered. 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 a Scholarship is accepted they are responsible for obtaining the required evidence of acceptance with their Host Institution and the correct visa/s for the duration of their Scholarship Program.

If offered a Scholarship, the decision to take up 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, and travel to the Host Location, and be fully informed about the risks at all times. Scholars are required to read carefully the travel advice for their destination and other relevant travel information pages on the Smartraveller website (such as 'Studying overseas', 'Women' and 'Health') for information about risks overseas and how they can prepare for

overseas travel. Scholars must also 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, to act as representatives 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 will be responsible for allocating a case manager and providing high quality assistance and program management for each Scholar. These services will include, but are not limited to, confirming with each Scholar a scholarship agreement; organisation of pre-departure arrangements; providing a briefing pack of required information; financial management of the funding used to pay the Scholarships; providing advice and guidance as requested or required; assistance to vary the Scholarship Program; and assisting with a Scholar's return to Australia on completion of the Program.

8 Complaints and feedback

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.

Complaints, inquiries and feedback in relation to the processing 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, email at ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au, or by post at:

The Commonwealth Ombudsman

GPO Box 442

CANBERRA ACT 2601

Due to the large number of applications received, the Department of Education and Training does not provide individual feedback on why an application was unsuccessful at the shortlisting stage. 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 did not receive an offer.

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 and Host Institution
- 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
- 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)
- representatives of Host Location 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 information on 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 Education and Training and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 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 Education and Training or the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 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)), 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. Personal Information will be handled in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Privacy Act.

10.4 Freedom of Information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (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 evaluation is an ongoing activity within the Government. As such, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Department of Education and Training along with 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 may be asked to participate in the evaluation of the Program, including university representatives, interview panel members, nominees, and Scholars.

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. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade can be contacted at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

13 Definitions of key terms

Academic Transcript means the list of subjects and academic results provided to the applicant by their Australian University, usually at the end of each semester, trimester or term.

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

Australian University is defined as a supplier listed under Table A or Table B of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cth).

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

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

Commencement of the Scholarship Program means the date the Scholarship holder commences their Scholarship Program as confirmed by their Host Institution 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, an Australian University's or applicant's performance of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the New Colombo Plan.

HECS-HELP means the HECS-HELP scheme administered under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cth). Further information is available at <http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/helppayingmyfees/hecs-help/pages/hecs-help-welcome>

Home University means the Australian University in which the applicant or Scholar is enrolled at the time they applied for a Scholarship and that determines whether an applicant's proposed study program overseas is credit-bearing.

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 where Scholars are enrolled for study in the Host Location.

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

Internship means a paid or unpaid professional work experience in which a student has intentional learning goals relevant to their academic qualification and professional development. Internships offer students the chance to test their skills in real-life situations, gain an insight into an organisation and career path, and build professional networks. Internships can include clinical placements or practicums.

Low Socio-Economic Status (SES) means students who are from a low SES background, as measured by the ABS Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Education and Occupation (IEO) measured at Statistical Area 1 (SA1) level or postcode level. Further information is available at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2033.0.55.0012011?OpenDocument>

Mentorship means a personal developmental relationship where a business professional or academic helps guide a student in her or his study or work to support learning and professional growth.

New Colombo Plan Liaison Officer for Scholarships means the person(s) nominated by each Australian University to submit nominations on behalf of their university and receive Program updates.

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

Program means the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program.

Program Delegate means a Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade or an Associate Secretary of the Department of Education and Training in their role as co-chairs of the Program Implementation Group.

Program Implementation Group is the group of officials, co-chaired by the Program Delegates, which oversees implementation of the New Colombo Plan.

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

Scholarship means scholarship funding paid to successful applicants under the Program.

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

Study Period means a period of study as defined by the Host Institution, e.g. may be semesters or trimesters.

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



New Colombo Plan Guidelines Scholarship Program

2015 Round

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1 Definitions of key terms

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Australian University is defined as a supplier listed under Table A or Table B of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

Bachelor Degree means undergraduate studies at a Bachelor's level as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Bachelor Honours Degree means undergraduate studies at a Bachelor's Honours level as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Commencement of the Scholarship Program means the date the Scholarship holder commences their Scholarship Program as confirmed by their Host Institution / Host Organisation for payments that are reliant on the commencement of the Term of the Scholarship.

Confidential Information is information which satisfies the four criteria listed at item 12.3 of these guidelines or is designated by the Commonwealth 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.

HECS-HELP means the scheme that is both a student loan and a student discount. Eligible students may access a HECS-HELP loan to pay their student contribution amount. Alternatively, eligible students can access the HECS-HELP discount by receiving a 10 per cent discount on any upfront payment of \$500 or more, if they choose not to use a HECS-HELP loan. NB: The Australian Government has announced its intentions to remove the HECS-HELP discount. Until the relevant legislation is passed, the current arrangements apply.

Home University means the Australian University in which the applicant or Scholar is enrolled at the time they applied for a Scholarship and that determines whether an applicant's proposed study program overseas is credit-bearing.

Host Location means the eligible geographic location in the Indo-Pacific region (see section 5.1) to which the Scholar will travel to undertake their Scholarship Program.

Host Institution means the academic institution the Scholar will attend for study in the Host Location.

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

Internship means a paid or unpaid professional work experience in which an individual has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what he or she is learning throughout the experience. Internships offer students the chance to test their skills in real-life situations, explore career options and gain an insight into an organisation or career path.

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

Mentorship means a personal developmental relationship where a business professional or academic helps guide a student in her or his study or work to support learning and professional growth.

Mobility Program means the New Colombo Plan Mobility Program.

New Colombo Plan Liaison Officer for Scholarships means the person(s) nominated by each Australian University to submit nominations on behalf of their university and receive updates.

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

Program means the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program.

Program Delegate means a Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade or an Associate Secretary of the Department of Education in their role as co-chairs of the Program Implementation Group.

Program Implementation Group is the group of officials, co-chaired by the Program Delegates, which oversees implementation of the New Colombo Plan.

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

Scholarship means scholarship funding paid to successful applicants for funding under the Program.

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

Study Period means a period of study as defined by the Host Institution, e.g. may be semesters or trimesters.

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

In these guidelines:

- 'may' is permissive and not mandatory;
- a reference to the singular includes the plural and vice versa; and
- if a word or phrase is defined its other grammatical forms have corresponding meanings.

2 Program Overview

2.1 Purpose of these Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to outline the process for selecting a group of Australian undergraduate students for the 2015 round of the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with any Frequently Asked Questions available on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website at www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan.

These guidelines commence on 4 August 2014.

2.2 About the New Colombo Plan

The New Colombo Plan is a flagship initiative of the Australian Government that aims to lift knowledge of the Indo-Pacific region in Australia and strengthen our people-to-people and institutional relationships, through study and Internships/Mentorships undertaken by Australian undergraduate students in the region.

The New Colombo Plan is intended to be transformational, deepening relationships with the region, both at the individual level and through expanding university, business and other stakeholder links. Over time, the Australian Government hopes to see study in the Indo-Pacific region become a “rite of passage” for Australian undergraduate students, and as an endeavour that is highly valued across the Australian community.

The Australian Government agreed to provide \$100 million of funding for the New Colombo Plan between 2013-2014 and 2017-2018. A close partnership between governments, universities and business is supporting the realisation of this important initiative. The pilot phase – begun in 2014 – is progressing well.

The New Colombo Plan has two key program funding elements: a Scholarship Program that will provide opportunities for individually selected undergraduates to undertake one or two semesters of study in the Indo-Pacific region; and a Mobility Program that will support increasing numbers of Australian undergraduates to undertake a range of flexible study options in the Indo-Pacific region. The opportunity for an Internship/Mentorship is also a hallmark of the New Colombo Plan.

The New Colombo Plan aims to increase the number of Australian undergraduate students studying in our region – particularly through new linkages supporting students who otherwise may not have accessed such an opportunity.

New Colombo Plan budget¹

2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
\$5,372,000	\$10,958,000	\$19,577,000	\$19,625,000	\$42,768,000

¹ Does not include capital expenses.

2.3 The New Colombo Plan strategic objectives

The New Colombo Plan aims to:

- lift knowledge of the Indo-Pacific in Australia and strengthen our people-to-people and institutional relationships by increasing the number of Australian undergraduate students undertaking study and Internships in the region;
- deepen Australia's relationships with the region through the engagement of university, business and other stakeholder networks in supporting the program and ensuring such experiences are highly valued across the Australian community; and
- be transformational in establishing study in the Indo-Pacific region to become a "rite of passage" for Australian undergraduate students, and increase the number of work-ready Australian graduates with regional experience.

Specifically, in 2015 the New Colombo Plan's objectives are to:

- provide around 60 Scholarships and \$8 million in mobility grants;
- support increased study experiences in as many Indo-Pacific locations as possible;
- support and promote innovative Mobility Program projects that provide opportunities in the Indo-Pacific for Australian undergraduate students to meet the New Colombo Plan objectives. New partnerships and programs between universities – as well as projects that build on and strengthen existing partnerships – are encouraged;
- support satisfying experiences for participating students and universities;
- engage New Colombo Plan students, universities and other stakeholders in public diplomacy and outreach;
- promote and support initiatives that lead to a substantial number of New Colombo Plan students undertaking an Internship/Mentorship; and
- continue to develop an active alumni community that provides the opportunity for participants to share their experiences, promote the New Colombo Plan and continue to develop knowledge of and professional links within the Indo-Pacific region.

2.4 The New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program

The Program provides opportunities for Australian undergraduate students, between 18 and 28 years of age, to undertake study, participate in an Internship/Mentorship and receive intensive language training in an eligible Host Location in the Indo-Pacific region. The Program also encourages students to participate in community engagement and advocacy in relation to the Program.

Study component

Scholars must undertake a full-time study program for which they will receive full credit at their Home University towards their Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honour's Degree. The study component of the Scholarship Program is mandatory and must be full-time for at least one Study Period (as defined by the Host Institution), and up to one full Academic Year in duration. Scholars may study at two institutions provided that all eligibility and process requirements for the Program are met for study at both institutions and that the Scholar receives academic credit at their Home University for study undertaken at both Host Institutions. For information on the status of a proposed study program, applicants should

seek advice in the first instance from their nominated course convenor, the New Colombo Plan Liaison Officer for Scholarships or the international office in their Home University.

Internship/Mentorship component

An Internship/Mentorship component is strongly encouraged. Internships may be undertaken on a part-time basis concurrent with study at a Host Institution or on a full-time basis (for a maximum of six months) subsequent to study at a Host Institution. Mentorships may only be undertaken on a part-time basis concurrent with study. If an Internship is undertaken subsequent to study at a Host Institution, the stipend will continue for the duration of the Internship. Internships/Mentorships may attract credit (or be a mandatory component of the course of study) as part of a Scholar's study program or separately, subject to agreement between the Scholar and their Home University. However, Internships/Mentorships do not need to be for additional credit or a mandatory component of the course of study. An Internship/Mentorship alone cannot constitute a Scholarship Program.

Language training

All Scholars are eligible for support to undertake intensive language training as part of their Scholarship Program. The training must be in a language that is applicable to the Host Location or the course of study in which the Scholar is completing their Scholarship Program, and be undertaken in-country. In addition to a training allowance, a maximum of one month of stipend will be provided for this training, if the training is not taken concurrently with either the study program or an Internship/Mentorship component.

Community engagement and advocacy

Following their return to Australia, Scholars are encouraged to participate in activities (including through engagement with the New Colombo Plan Secretariat in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) that share the experiences of their Scholarship Program with other students and their community. The activities will aim to identify and foster potential New Colombo Plan Scholars and advocate for the Program. Scholars will also be asked to complete evaluation reports and/or presentations, and an exit survey.

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Australian Government

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for taking the strategic leadership and setting the policy direction for the New Colombo Plan. The New Colombo Plan Secretariat, within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, will participate in short-listing applications for interview and is responsible for convening interview panels that will make recommendations on applicants to the Program Delegate/s. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will manage pre-departure events and alumni activities for Scholars in consultation with the Department of Education. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will also provide any consular support to Scholars in line with that offered to all Australian citizens, should the need arise.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade does not arrange work placements or study programs, including accommodation in the Host Location, nor direct Host Institutions, Host

Organisations, or Scholars about the manner in which work placements and study programs are carried out. Such matters are for Home Universities, Host Institutions, Host Organisations and Scholars to determine. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade does not have a direct or indirect contractual, financial, or supervisory relationship with any Scholars.

Contact: ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au

The Department of Education is responsible for administering the Program, including by procuring a Support Services Organisation. The Department of Education will undertake eligibility checks of applicants and participate in short-listing applications for interview and in interview panels. The Department of Education will be the first point of contact for students and New Colombo Plan Liaison Officers for Scholarships on administrative matters, including eligibility for the Program, nominations, applications, and attendance at interview. All enquiries, including for assistance in the nomination or application stage should be directed to the contact email below.

Contact: ncp.scholarships@education.gov.au

The Program Delegate/s will approve final Scholarship outcomes based on the advice of the interview panels.

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

3.2 Australian Universities

Each Australian University is responsible for identifying and nominating up to 10 Scholarship applicants for the 2015 round. It is the responsibility of Australian Universities to seek and receive appropriate consents from students for their details to be provided to the Department of Education and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the nomination process. Australian Universities are also responsible for ensuring each applicant's proposed study program is credit-bearing and assisting with obtaining the required evidence of acceptance with Host Institutions. Australian Universities are also 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.

3.3 Applicants

Applicants must meet all the relevant eligibility criteria set out in these guidelines and be nominated by their Home University. 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 8.1 of these guidelines) should contact the New Colombo Plan Liaison Officer for Scholarships or the international office in their Home University. A list of New Colombo Plan Liaison Officers for Scholarships is available at www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan/liaison-officers.html. It is the applicant's responsibility to arrange and (if successful) confirm any Internship/Mentorship.

Applicants should read carefully sections 5-11 of these guidelines. It is their responsibility to ensure that their completed application and supporting documentation, including referee reports, are submitted by the closing date. Applicants must meet all costs associated with the preparation and lodgement of their application. Applications (including supporting documentation) received after the closing date will not be considered.

Applicants must obtain the required evidence of affiliation with their Host Institution and if offered a Scholarship they are responsible for obtaining the required evidence of acceptance with their Host Institution and the correct visa/s for the duration of their Scholarship Program. If offered a Scholarship, the decision to take up 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, and to the Host Location, and be fully informed about the risks at all times. Successful Scholars are required to read carefully the www.smartraveller.gov.au website operated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for information about risks overseas and how they can prepare for overseas travel. Scholars must also register on the Smartraveller website and subscribe to relevant travel advisories on www.smartraveller.gov.au prior to commencement of their Scholarship.

4 Scholarship benefits and acknowledgement of Fellows

4.1 Benefits of the Scholarship

A Scholarship will provide Scholars with:

- a travel allowance of \$2,500
- an establishment allowance of \$2,500
- a variable location-based monthly stipend of up to \$2,500
- 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; and
- a certificate of completion.

A Scholarship may also provide:

- Payment of up to one Academic Year's international tuition fees to a maximum of \$15,000, payable directly to the Host Institution (see section 4.2); and
- Payment of \$1,000 for in-country language training fees, payable directly to the language training provider (see section 4.2).

The maximum duration of a Scholarship Program is 17 months.

4.2 Tuition and language training fees

Where a Scholar is not undertaking an exchange program, payment of international tuition fees will be covered by the New Colombo Plan. Payment of international tuition fees (where incurred) of up to \$15,000 (\$7,500 per semester based or \$5,000 per trimester based Study Period) for a maximum of one Academic Year will be made directly to the Host Institution. For the purposes of the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program tuition fees also include student service and amenities fees.

If the Scholar's study abroad is under the auspices of an exchange program and the Host Institution does not charge tuition fees, the allocation for tuition fees will not be provided. The Scholar may not use the international tuition fees allocation to pay for fees charged by their Home University. That is, a Scholar may still be liable for HECS-HELP if on exchange.

Where relevant, payment of in-country language training fees (where incurred) of up to \$1,000 will be made directly to the language training provider.

4.3 New Colombo Plan Fellows

For each Host Location within the Indo-Pacific, the top-ranked candidate will be acknowledged as a New Colombo Plan Fellow. In determining Fellows, preference may be given to candidates undertaking one Academic Year of study. In addition to the benefits outlined in section 4.1, New Colombo Plan Fellows will be awarded \$1,000 to purchase study or learning materials in preparation for or during their Scholarship.

5 Eligibility

5.1 Eligible Host Locations

Scholarship Programs can be conducted in the following eligible Host Locations. Scholars must undertake the majority of their Scholarship Program in one eligible Host Location. However, they may study or undertake an Internship/Mentorship at multiple Host Institutions or Host Organisations. In certain circumstances, Scholars may undertake some study or Internship/Mentorship activities in another eligible Host Location where it is demonstrated that it adds meaningful value to the core Scholarship Program. No additional funding (to that outlined in section 4) will be provided for a Scholarship Program undertaken in more than one eligible Host Location – that is, the travel allowance and the establishment allowance each will be paid once only to a Scholar. Such a program would also be subject to relevant visa conditions.

The following eligible Host Locations span South Asia, South East Asia, North Asia and a number of locations in the Pacific:

- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- Brunei
- Burma
- Cambodia
- China
- Cook Islands

- Federated States of Micronesia
- Fiji
- India
- Indonesia
- Hong Kong
- Japan
- Kiribati
- Laos
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Marshall Islands
- Mongolia
- Nauru
- Nepal
- Niue
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Papua New Guinea
- Philippines
- Samoa
- Singapore
- Solomon Islands
- South Korea
- Sri Lanka
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- Timor-Leste
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu
- Vietnam

To ensure a diversity of Host Locations is represented in the Program, an expected maximum of around 10 Scholarships will be awarded for study in any single eligible Host Location, noting that a maximum of around 60 Scholarships will be awarded in the 2015 round. Some eligible Host Locations may receive no Scholars.

Scholars must not travel to 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 is at the level 'Reconsider your need to travel' are eligible for New Colombo Plan funding, but applicants must acknowledge explicitly that they have considered the risks carefully before deciding to apply/travel.

Study will preferably take place at local Host Institutions. Applicants cannot study at off-shore campuses from other locations. On a 12-month trial basis, study is eligible at off-shore campuses of Australian Universities if the following conditions are met:

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

5.2 Who is eligible to apply?

Applicants must:

- be an Australian citizen. Applicants with dual citizenship, permanent residency or similar in another country/location are eligible, however, they must undertake their Scholarship in a third Host Location, in which they do not have citizenship or residency rights;
- be enrolled in an on-shore campus of an Australian University at the time of application;
- be between 18 and 28 (inclusive) years of age as at 1 January 2015;
- be undertaking a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree at the Commencement of the Scholarship Program. Bachelor Degree applicants must have completed at least one year of their Bachelor Degree at the Commencement of the Scholarship Program;
- have achieved a minimum 70 per cent graded average or equivalent for their undergraduate course to date;
- not be undertaking another Australian Government funded off-shore scholarship at the Commencement of, or concurrently with, the Scholarship Program; and
- not be a previous recipient of a New Colombo Plan Scholarship.

Where applicants are similarly meritorious, preference may be given to a student who has not previously been the beneficiary of an Australian Government funded off-shore scholarship. Successful applicants are also required to not accept another Australian Government funded off-shore Scholarship or mobility grant (including a New Colombo Plan Mobility Program grant) while holding a New Colombo Plan Scholarship.

Additionally, the applicant's proposed Scholarship Program must:

- be full-time. Students who are studying part-time in Australia are eligible to apply for a Scholarship, if they are in accordance with other eligibility requirements. However, while overseas, Scholars must undertake a full-time study program (for which they will receive full credit); and
- commence between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2015. Applicants who have already commenced or will commence a study abroad or exchange program overseas prior to 1 January 2015 are not eligible to apply for a Scholarship to continue that study.

6 Timeline for selection process

The table below summarises key dates and steps for the selection process.

Timeline	Activity
4 August 2014	Program guidelines distributed to universities
4 August – 29 August 2014	Australian Universities nominate applicants via the online system

1 Sept – 26 Sept 2014	Nominated students receive application guide and an invitation to complete an online application form. Applicants complete their application and gather supporting documentation
26 Sept 2014	Applications close at 11.59pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST)
October 2014	Applications are shortlisted and shortlisted applicants are notified
October – November 2014	Shortlisted applicants are interviewed
November 2014	Selections are finalised and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Education are notified of selection outcomes All successful and unsuccessful applicants are notified of the outcome of their application
December 2014	Details of successful Scholars published on website, as per Commonwealth Grant Guidelines requirements
1 January – 31 December 2015	Successful Scholars leave for their Scholarship Program

7 Nomination and application for Scholarships

7.1 Number of nominations per university

Students must be nominated by their Home University in order to apply. Each Australian University is asked to conduct an internal process to nominate up to 10 students to apply for the 2015 round of the Program.

7.2 Issues to consider in nominations

Eligibility and selection criteria

Australian Universities must consider all eligibility criteria when conducting their nomination process, including the requirement of a minimum graded average of 70 per cent or equivalent, as academic performance is a key selection criterion for the Program.

Maximum applied to each eligible Host Location

In addition, Australian Universities should note that to ensure a degree of geographic spread, an expected maximum of around 10 Scholarships is likely to be awarded for study in any single Host Location, noting that a maximum of around 60 Scholarships will be awarded in the 2015 round. Some Host Locations may receive no Scholars. Universities may wish to consider this in making their nominations.

7.3 Submission of nominations

Nominations must be submitted through the New Colombo Plan Online application system. The Department of Education 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;
- Mobile phone;
- Degree in which the applicant is enrolled;
- Students graded average as represented by a percentage mark; and
- Intended Host Location (where known).

7.4 How should applications be submitted?

Applications must be submitted through the New Colombo Plan Online application system. The application requires applicants to provide details of their proposed Scholarship Program (including the mandatory study component, and the Internship/Mentorship and language training components, where applicable) and the Host Location in which they intend to complete their Scholarship Program. The application form also requires applicants to respond to three selection criteria (see section 8.1).

The Department of Education will provide students nominated by their Home University with an application pack, including instructions on how to complete and submit an application and the required supporting documentation (including referee reports).

Applicants are responsible for all costs incurred in the preparation and lodgement of their applications.

Applicants should be aware that giving false or misleading information to the Commonwealth is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth).

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

7.5 What supporting documents are required?

Applicants must have two referee reports, including at least one report prepared by an academic referee. Referee reports must be submitted by referees through the New Colombo Plan Online application system.

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);
- evidence of current enrolment at their Home University;
- a current, complete-to-date Academic Transcript from their Home University; and
- evidence of affiliation with their Host Institution(s).

Applicants do not require evidence of acceptance at their Host Institution(s) at the time of application. Rather, at the time of submitting their application, applicants must provide evidence of affiliation – that is, evidence that demonstrates that they have considered a study program and institution(s) with which they would like to study in one of the eligible Host Locations, should they be successful in obtaining a Scholarship. The evidence must also demonstrate that the applicant has begun the process of determining their eligibility with that proposed Host Institution(s).

The evidence confirming affiliation could be, 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** (on the Home University's letterhead) outlining partnership arrangements to allow for commencement between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2015
- an **email or letter from the applicant or the applicant's Home University to the proposed Host Institution(s)** indicating the student is in the process of applying for a New Colombo Plan Scholarship and, if successful, they would be seeking to enrol and undertake a study program with that proposed Host Institution. This evidence should include a response from the proposed Host Institution.

Evidence of acceptance at the Host Institution must be provided to the Support Services Organisation by Scholars prior to commencing their Scholarship. Evidence of acceptance at a Host Institution could be in the form of:

- an acceptance letter or email from the Host Institution to the applicant confirming enrolment;
- an acceptance letter or email from the Host Institution to the Home University confirming enrolment; or
- a letter from the Home University to the applicant confirming that the placement at the Host Institution has been agreed.

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

8 Selection process

Following the closing of applications, Scholars will be selected through a competitive, merit-based selection process.

All applications submitted by the closing date will be subject to eligibility checks. All eligible applications are then short-listed by the Department of Education and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade using the selection criteria.

Shortlisted applicants will be advised in October 2014 and an interview with a panel will be scheduled during October-November 2014. Interview panels may comprise representatives from among the following: government officials, members of the business community, academics, diplomatic corps representatives or others as determined appropriate.

The Program Delegate/s will approve final Scholarship outcomes based on the advice of the interview panels.

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

8.1 What are the selection criteria for applications?

The following are the selection criteria against which applicants will be assessed, including their relative weighting. Applicants should address each criterion and limit their responses to 300 words per criterion. Applicants should use the guidance in the square brackets to draft their response.

- Demonstrated academic excellence (50 per cent weighting)
[Note: The total assessment of this criterion will relate to academic excellence as demonstrated through the applicant's graded average achieved in tertiary studies and to academic awards and commendations at the tertiary level and evidence of excellence demonstrated through referee reporting.]
- Demonstrated leadership in the community (25 per cent weighting)
[Applicants may consider including volunteer and not-for-profit roles and/or activities they have undertaken in their local community, overseas or in their university.]

- The applicant describes how this experience enhances their cultural awareness, employment potential and their ability to operate in new and changing environments. The applicant also demonstrates an understanding of the overarching goals of the New Colombo Plan and how their proposed Scholarship Program contributes to those goals (25 per cent weighting)
[Applicants may wish to consider how all elements of their Scholarship Program, including an Internship or Mentorship, support their response to this criterion.]

8.2 Other considerations

In addition to the selection criteria, where applicants have similarly meritorious claims, preference may be given to applicants whose inclusion will promote:

- balance and diversity in: Host Locations; fields of study; study options; Home Universities and Host Institutions; amongst the states and territories; and across the genders;
- Internships/Mentorships;
- longer term (e.g. two semesters) study;
- opportunities for students who have not previously received an Australia Government funded off-shore scholarship; and
- representation from diverse student groups (including but not limited to: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; students from a Low Socio-Economic Status; students from regional/remote areas; students with disabilities or students from a non-English speaking background).

9 Acceptance process

9.1 How will applicants be advised of the outcome of their application?

All successful and unsuccessful applicants will be advised of the outcome of their applications by the end of November 2014.

Due to the large number of applications usually received, the Department of Education does not provide individual feedback on why an individual's application was unsuccessful. There may be a number of reasons why an application does not progress through the process. Please see the Program website <http://www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan/Scholarship-program.html> at the conclusion of the round for the most common reasons why applicants did not receive an offer.

9.2 Offer of Scholarship

Applicants who are offered a Scholarship must agree to the terms and conditions of their Scholarship and accept their Scholarship online within the prescribed time. Those applicants who are offered a Scholarship must be able to satisfy all the visa requirements of the Host Location/s in which they wish to undertake their Scholarship Program.

Police Checks

All Scholars will be required to undergo a police check before their Scholarship is confirmed. It is an important consideration of the Australian Government that a Scholar is a suitable

person who 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 which the Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, considers would harm the reputation of the New Colombo Plan, then the Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, may refuse to grant or may revoke a Scholarship.

Support Services Organisation

After satisfying a police check, successful applicants will be allocated by the Department of Education to a Support Services Organisation contracted by the Department of Education to manage support services for Scholars. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Scholarship agreement with the Support Services Organisation.

10 Scholarship agreement

The scholarship agreement between the Scholar and the Support Services Organisation will need to be executed before the Scholarship can be paid to the Scholar. If the Scholarship Program is commenced before there is a scholarship agreement executed, the Commonwealth will not be liable for an expenditure incurred before the date of execution of the scholarship agreement.

The scholarship agreement will detail the successful applicant's responsibilities in relation to the Scholarship Program and outcomes that need to 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;
- pre-departure advice and assistance;
- arrival in Host Location;
- assistance with arrangement of return flights;
- travel and health insurance;
- confirmation of Internships/Mentorships;
- minimum monthly contact;
- Australian community engagement/advocacy;
- permissions relating to use of photographs, footage, words, images, quotes or other comments made by or attributed by the Scholar and information about the Scholar (e.g. name, Home University and field of study); and
- requests to vary Scholarship Program arrangements.

10.1 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*.

10.2 What documents about the Program should be retained?

It is a condition of being paid the Scholarship that Scholars retain all documents and records in relation to their application and the Scholarship Program for a period of seven years after the completion of the Scholarship and that the Scholars provide this information to authorised officers of the Department of Education or the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade if requested to do so.

11 How are complaints and feedback handled?

The Australian Government will not accept responsibility 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.

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

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

12 Disclosure of information

The use and disclosure of information provided to the Department of Education and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 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.

12.1 What information about successful applicants will be announced?

The Department of Education and the Department of Foreign Affairs may publicly announce details of individual Scholarships, including, but not limited to:

- the names of successful applicants, their Home University, Host Location and Host Institution;
- a brief description of study areas and Internships/Mentorships being supported (and their timing); and
- the amount of funding awarded.

12.2 Privacy

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

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

- assessing applications;

- administering and performance monitoring the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program;
- promoting the New Colombo Plan, including in promotional material, information and publications in hardcopy and/or on the internet; and
- 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 Education and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 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;
- Australian Parliamentarians and Parliamentary committees;
- contractors and agents of the Department of Education and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade;
- 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 or organisations are not bound by Australian privacy legislation);
- representatives of Host Location governments/authorities (noting that representatives of foreign governments/authorities are not bound by Australian Privacy legislation); and
- in publicly available promotional material, information and publications in hardcopy and/or on the internet.

The Department of Education and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will not otherwise use or disclose the Personal Information for a purpose other than that identified in these Guidelines, except where:

- the Department of Education and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade have the individual's consent to use or disclose the information for that other purpose;
- the individual would reasonably expect a use or disclosure to be made for that other purpose and it is related to the purposes outlined in these Guidelines;
- the use or disclosure of the information for another purpose is required or authorised by or under an Australian law or a court/tribunal order;
- permitted general situation exists (such as serious threats to life, health or safety of an individual or the public, suspected unlawful activity or serious misconduct; missing persons; legal or equitable claims; alternative dispute resolution processes; or diplomatic or consular functions); or
- the use or disclosure is reasonably necessary for enforcement related activities by or on behalf of an enforcement body.

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

- Department of Education - 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 .

12.3 Confidentiality

Identification of Confidential Information

Information which satisfies the four criteria listed below will be treated by the Commonwealth 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; and
- the information was provided by the applicant under an understanding that it would remain confidential.

Confidential Information also includes information designated by the Commonwealth 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 Education, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and other parts of the Commonwealth.

The Confidential Information will be disclosed to Commonwealth employees and contractors and agents for the purposes of determining the suitability of applicants to enhance the reputation of Australia as a New Colombo Plan Scholar.

In addition to the above, the Department of Education and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 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 Commonwealth for audit-related purposes;
- other Commonwealth agencies for law enforcement purposes, where the disclosure will serve the Commonwealth's legitimate interests and, if necessary, to substantiate an applicant's claims; or
- a technical, financial, economic and/or industry expert (including auditors) from whom the Department of Education or the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade wishes to seek advice.

Confidential Information may also be disclosed if the Commonwealth is otherwise required or permitted by law to do so (for example in accordance with the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*), 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 Commonwealth. Personal Information will be handled in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Privacy Act.

12.4 Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act) provides a legally enforceable right 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 on FOI requests.

13 How will the Program be evaluated?

Any information collected as part of the Program can be used by the Support Services Organisation, the Department of Education and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for performance monitoring and management of the New Colombo Plan. Information will also be used to create testimonials for promotional material.

The New Colombo Plan Online application system will be used by the Support Services Organisation, the Department of Education 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 may be asked to participate in the evaluation of the Program, including university representatives, interview panel members, nominees, applicants and Scholars.



New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2024 Round Advice to Applicants

The 2024 New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program Guidelines outline round eligibility requirements, assessment criteria and how funding will be allocated to successful applicants. Applicants must read these Guidelines on [GrantConnect](#) before starting an application.

Key changes in the 2024 round

Updates to the 2024 Guidelines aim to ensure consistency with the Australian Government's policy priorities. These updates include:

Changes	Rationale
Added undergraduate language-focused qualification as eligible course (sections 4.1d, 5.2c of guidelines)	To increase opportunities to support language learning, in line with the Government's priority in language training.
Removed the maximum duration of 6 months for full-time language training (section 5.2.4c) and removed the part-time language training tuition fee cap of \$1500 (section 5.4.2)	To encourage uptake of language learning, in line with the Government's priority in language training. Up to \$10,000 per scholarship can be spent on language training.
Increased scholarship allowances (section 5.4.3)	To reflect increased in cost of undertaking an international study program
Included Pacific Fellow and Climate Change Fellow awards (section 6.3)	To align with Government policy priorities in the Pacific and in climate change

**Policy updates in the 2024 NCP Scholarship Program Guidelines apply only to the 2024 round; they do not apply to previous rounds.*

Smartraveller advice

NCP scholarship programs cannot proceed in a host location (or region within a host location) for which the Smartraveller advice is 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel'" (see section 5.5.4 of the Guidelines).

Applicants are strongly discouraged from proposing programs to a host location (or a region within a host location) with such a travel advice, except where that advice is likely to be short-term, for example due to the temporary impact of a natural disaster.

Travel from Australia cannot proceed to such locations if that travel advice remains in place at the scholar's time of departure.

Lessons learned from previous NCP scholarship rounds

Independent assessors who considered past applications noted the importance of applicants providing evidence to support their claims in applications.

Criterion 1: Academic excellence at the tertiary level

Higher scored responses:

- demonstrated prolonged dedication to academic achievement, learning and personal development, supported by concrete examples and strong academic references. These responses demonstrated creativity, innovation, strong communication skills, problem-solving skills, and/or critical thinking skills. Examples included participation in competitions or projects that required high levels of innovation or problem solving
- provided evidence of commendations, awards, scholarships, internships, or acceptance into selective academic programs etc, and explained how these opportunities developed the applicant's critical thinking skills

Lower scored responses:

- demonstrated limited achievement beyond standard university student experiences
- did not provide evidence of the applicant's communication skills, higher-order cognitive and critical thinking skills and/or engagement in learning.

Criterion 2: Leadership and engagement in the community

Higher scored responses:

- gave examples of sustained community engagement, often in a variety of fields
- demonstrated longer-term leadership that developed a program/activity/organisation from conception to implementation
- showed an effective ability to collaborate with other stakeholders and positively influence outcomes.

Lower scored responses often:

- only outlined participation, without explaining how the applicant contributed to improved outcomes for their community (which may include a variety of groups: voluntary, community, cultural, educational and/or paid employment)
- did not demonstrate how the applicant utilised their leadership skills to contribute effectively and bring about change, resolve problems or find solutions.

Criterion 3: Adaptability and resilience

Higher scored responses:

- demonstrated strong self-awareness and identified strategies that applicants used to overcome a range of challenges in their academic studies and/or personal life
- demonstrated insights applicant had gained from dealing with challenging situations and setbacks
- explained how lessons learned from past experiences would apply to their proposed NCP program, including their ability to thrive in a cross-cultural environment and deal with unforeseen events.

Lower scored responses often:

- demonstrated limited self-awareness regarding personal growth and development in the face of challenging circumstances
- little understanding of coping mechanisms to adapt or show resilience.

Criterion 4: Ability to contribute to the NCP strategic objective and outcomes

Higher scored responses:

- demonstrated linkages between the applicant's proposed program and the NCP objective and outcomes
- clearly explained how their interests, proposed program and NCP outcomes intersected
- provided well-considered examples of where/how people-to-people and institutional relationships could be fostered during their time offshore and maintained on return to Australia
- demonstrated a broad range of strategies to promote the NCP and the scholar's experiences to a range of stakeholders, both while overseas and as an active alumni member after return to Australia

Lower scored responses:

- demonstrated limited understanding of the NCP objective and outcomes
- did not explain how their program would contribute to those objectives

Referees

Some referee reports have not added value to information contained in the applicant's responses to selection criteria in their application. Applicants should try to choose referees that have good knowledge of the applicant's strengths in relation to the assessment criteria, including providing examples to support their views of the applicant.

Applicants should allow sufficient time for referees to provide a considered report. Further information for applicants, referees and Australian universities regarding the referee report process is provided in the [Guide to Referee Reports in New Colombo Plan Online \(for Applicants and referees\)](#) [PDF 630 KB] | [Word 1.39 MB]

Other considerations

Where applicants are similarly meritorious at both the application and interview stages, preference may be given to applicants proposing longer periods of study and/or an internship/mentorship and/or longer periods of language training. This aligns with the NCP's objective to give scholars a long-term, immersive and comprehensive experience in the Indo-Pacific region. The longer an applicant's program, and the more components it includes (e.g. study, internship and language training), the more transformative their experience is likely to be.

Priority will also be given to applicants who clearly explain the relationship between their proposed study, language and internship components.

We encourage NCP scholars to have an immersive experience at their primary host location wherever possible. This means undertaking their study component (mandatory), internship and language training at the primary host location wherever possible. However, if scholars are unable to find a suitable internship at the primary host location, they may undertake an internship at a secondary host location (subject to *Smartraveller* advice), provided the total time spent at the primary host location is longer than the total time spent at all secondary host locations combined.

The NCP particularly encourages participation from students from a diverse range of backgrounds including, but not limited to, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, students from a low socio-economic status background, students from regional/remote areas or universities, students

who are first in their immediate family to attend university, students across the genders, female students studying in non-traditional fields, students with a disability, and students from a non-English speaking background.

Some NCP host locations attract more NCP scholarship applications than others. (Consequently, competition for scholarships to those locations is particularly strong). The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), in the final selection of scholars, will seek to ensure a spread of scholarships across the range of host locations, where possible.

Application Guide

Carefully read through the instructions on [how to complete an application for the NCP Scholarship Program using the NCP Online website](#).

Frequently asked questions

Timing of release of academic results and official academic transcripts

Can the ILO submit a nominee's unofficial academic transcript if the official copy is not yet available at the time of nomination?

Yes. Where official transcripts cannot be provided by the closing of nominations, "unofficial" academic transcripts may be submitted at nominations e.g screenshots, with official transcripts to be provided by the applicant in their application.

Required documents

Why is a CV required as part of the NCP scholarship application?

A CV allows the applicant to provide more details of their achievements, beyond their responses to assessment criteria, by highlighting their academic achievements/awards, work experience, community engagement and extra-curricular interests. The CV enables assessors to gain a fuller picture of the applicant's achievements over time (for example, the length of volunteering and community engagement).

Police checks

How will police checks be organised for the nominee/applicant?

All applicants must undertake a police check. DFAT's contractor will conduct police checks for each applicant following the closing of the nomination period.

In the nomination form, University International Liaison Officers (ILOs) must indicate that the student has provided consent for the contractor to conduct a police check.

The contractor will contact the applicant to seek further information and documents such as an Australian passport, driver licence or Medicare card.

Host location

Can my proposed host location in the application be different from that in the nomination?

Yes. The host location specified in the application will be treated as final.

Can a scholar commence their NCP scholarship program with an internship component at a secondary host location prior to their study component at their primary host location?

We encourage NCP scholars to have an immersive experience at their primary host location wherever possible. This means undertaking their study component (mandatory), internship and language training at the primary host location wherever possible. However, if scholars are unable to find a suitable internship at the primary host location, they may undertake an internship at a secondary host location (subject to *Smartraveller* advice), provided the total time spent at the primary host location is longer than the total time spent at all secondary host locations combined.

A scholar may commence their NCP scholarship program with an internship at a secondary host location (for up to three months) before relocating to the primary host location for the study component, subject to *Smartraveller* advice at time of travel.

The scholar will need to provide confirmation of enrolment for their mandatory study component (at their primary host location) prior to departing Australia.

The scholar must ensure that the visa for the primary host location can be granted if they arrive there from the secondary host location (rather than from Australia).

Study component**If I have recently changed degrees or I am in the process of changing to another bachelor or bachelor honours degree, am I still eligible for the NCP scholarship?**

Yes, you are eligible, provided your NCP scholarship study component will be fully credit-bearing to your new degree and meet all study component requirements in section 5.2.1 of the NCP Scholarship Program Guidelines. As per section 7.4 of the Guidelines, your home university must provide a letter attesting to the feasibility of your proposed study component in relation to your new degree.

Do I need confirmation of enrolment at the host university when I submit my NCP scholarship application?

No, you do not, in the NCP Scholarship application process, need to provide confirmation of enrolment at your proposed host university. Please see section 7.4 of the Guidelines regarding attachments required for your study component.

If I am studying a double degree, would one letter attesting to the feasibility of my study component suffice or do I need a separate letter from each faculty?

While one letter is sufficient, if the units will be credit bearing to both degrees, then that letter should be signed by both faculties (and the University International Liaison Officer) to confirm the feasibility of the proposed study component.

Can I study at a host institution that is an offshore campus of an Australian university?

Usually not. The NCP aims to establish linkages between Australian institutions and Indo-Pacific institutions and for scholars to have an immersive local experience at their host location. Preference will be given to applicants who do not nominate an offshore campus of an Australian university as their host university. Applicants should explore all possible locally-based host institutions as prospective host institutions.

Only if all such options are exhausted, should an applicant consider a host institution that is an offshore campus of an Australian university. If an applicant chooses such a host institution, they

must provide evidence of efforts to identify courses at locally-based institutions and address the following in their scholarship application:

- a. whether there are local host institutions in the proposed location that offer relevant courses that could receive credit from the home university, and
- b. whether Australian students are the minority of the student body and students are taught predominantly by local and international academics at the proposed host institution.

An applicant cannot apply to study at an offshore campus of the Australian university at which they are enrolled in Australia (and to which the offshore study would be credited). The NCP aims to build linkages between Australian institutions and Asia-Pacific institutions.

Can scholars undertake two study components (i.e. each study component = one semester) at different host institutions and different host locations?

Yes, you may undertake two study components during your NCP scholarship program, where each study component is a semester long.

You may undertake your study components in any of the following combinations:

- two study components at host institution A
- one study component at host institution A and one study component at host institution B, where both institutions are in the same host location.
- one study component at host institution A and one study component at host institution B, where the host institutions are in different host locations.

The primary host location is where the NCP scholar will undertake their most substantial study component and also spend the most time during their scholarship program. The total time spent at the primary host location must be longer than the total time spent at all secondary host locations combined. Also, the total duration of your NCP scholarship program must not exceed 19 months.

Honours students

I am in the final year of my Bachelor degree and would like to undertake an Honours program for my NCP study component. However, enrolment into the Honours program will only open after the closing of the NCP scholarship application period. Am I still eligible?

Yes, you are eligible to apply for an NCP scholarship. Please provide as much information on your proposed Honours program as possible at the time of your application e.g a provisional offer for an honours program conditional on your Bachelor degree results; a confirmed honours supervisor, a proposed honours project, confirmation from your home university that your proposed NCP study component will be credit bearing to your home honours degree. The award of a scholarship will be conditional on your enrolment into an honours program at your home university.

Do I need to enrol at the host institution if I'm undertaking only a research-based Honours study component i.e. no coursework?

No, you do not need to enrol at the host institution if you are undertaking only a research-based Honours study component i.e. no coursework.

If you will undertake coursework as part of your NCP study component, you must enrol at the host institution, and ensure your home university credits the coursework units back to your Australian degree.

Referees

Can I nominate two academic referees?

Yes. Both your referees may be academic referees, as long as they can comment substantively across the assessment criteria.

Can I nominate a referee from high school?

You are required to nominate an academic referee who can comment substantively on the assessment criteria, particularly the criterion on academic excellence at the tertiary level. An academic from your university, rather than from your high school, will be better placed to comment on this criterion. However, you may nominate a personal referee from your high school if they are able to comment on the remaining criteria.

Does my academic referee have to be from my current home university?

Generally, yes. However, if, for example, your academic referee has recently left your home university, you may still nominate them, if they can comment substantively on the assessment criteria.

If you have recently changed home universities, you may nominate an academic referee from your previous home university, provided they can comment substantively on the assessment criteria.

If I have changed courses at university recently, can I nominate an academic referee from a previous course?

Yes, provided they can comment substantively on the assessment criteria.

Does my academic referee have to comment on the non-academic related assessment criteria?

You should select an academic referee who can comment substantively on all assessment criteria wherever possible. However, if your academic referee is only able to comment on the academic-related assessment criteria, they can leave blank the response to the remaining assessment criteria. Your personal referee must be able to comment substantively on the remaining assessment criteria.

Students studying online may find it difficult to nominate an academic referee, due to having had little interaction with academics on campus. What advice would you give?

In such cases, your academic referee may comment only on the first criterion (academic excellence at the tertiary level) and leave one or all the other criteria blank (if they are unable to comment on them). Applicants should ensure their other referee can comment substantively on the remaining criteria.

Can referees save their draft report and complete it later?

Referees may save each completed section of the report and return to the report at a later stage. There is no need to complete the entire report in one session.

My referee has accidentally submitted their incomplete report. Is it possible for the referee to resume the report?

No. referees cannot edit a report after it has been submitted. However, the applicant can remove the referee from their application (select the "Remove" button) and re-enter the referee's details. The referee will receive an email containing a new link and password to start a new report.

Internships**Do I have to confirm or lock in internships during the application stage?**

No, any internships in your application do not need to be confirmed. However, we encourage you to conduct research, speak to NCP alumni, and make enquiries with potential internship host organisations on possible internship opportunities, and include the details of these potential internships in your application. You should demonstrate that you have researched possible internships and explain how they will align with your study/career goals and the NCP program objective and outcomes.

Can I undertake an internship at a host location that is different from where I undertake the study component?

We encourage NCP scholars to have an immersive experience at their primary host location wherever possible. This means undertaking their study component (mandatory), internship and language training at the primary host location wherever possible. However, if scholars are unable to find a suitable internship at the primary host location, they may undertake an internship at a secondary host location (subject to *Smartraveller* advice), provided the total time spent at the primary host location is longer than the total time spent at all secondary host locations combined. Please explain how your proposed program components will achieve your study/career goals and NCP program objective and outcomes.

Given that scholars need to commence their NCP scholarship program between 1 January and 15 December of the scholarship round year, is it possible to undertake a full-time internship at the host location from say mid-December of the scholarship round year and only commence the study component in March of the following year?

Yes. For example, if you commence your NCP scholarship program with a full-time internship component or language training component on 15 December 2024, then the latest you may commence your study component is 15 March 2025.

As per section 5.1(a) of the guidelines, your study component must commence within three months of commencing your scholarship program subject to international travel restrictions.

Is there a limit to the number of internships I can undertake during the NCP scholarship program?

No, there is no limit to the number of internships you can complete, provided they meet the requirements stated in section 5.2.2 of the Guidelines.

Visas

Do I need to find out about visas during the application stage?

No. You only need to seek advice regarding visas if you are awarded an NCP scholarship. If you are awarded an NCP scholarship, you will need to organise a visa for your host location by contacting the relevant diplomatic mission/s to seek up-to-date advice on the appropriate visas for your program.

Visa requirements for study may be different from those for internships, even in the same host location, and can be subject to change at short notice. Scholars are required to ensure that they receive up-to-date advice for all components of their program.



New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2023 Round Advice to Applicants

The 2023 New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program Guidelines outline 2023 round eligibility requirements, assessment criteria and how funding will be allocated to successful applicants. Applicants must read these Guidelines on [GrantConnect](#) before starting an application.

Applicants should also familiarise themselves with the sample 2023 scholarship agreement, which is also available on GrantConnect.

Key changes in the 2023 round

Updates to the 2023 NCP Scholarship Program are reflected in the 2023 Guidelines and aim to ensure consistency with the Australian Government's requirements for grant administration. These updates include:

- Reference to clarify the role of the contractor as the first point of contact for applicants and Australian universities on administrative matters, including eligibility for the NCP Scholarship Program, nominations, applications and candidate interviews (section 2.7).
- Reference to the contractor's role in arranging police checks for each applicant (section 4.2).
- Clarity on requirements related to internships where a scholar who is currently employed with an organisation must not undertake an internship with that organisation (section 5.3.1).
- A new requirement for applicants to provide a current CV outlining the applicant's work experience, community engagements and extra-curricular interests (section 7.4f).

Host location eligibility

NCP scholarship programs cannot proceed in a host location or region within a host location for which the *Smartraveller* advice is 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' (see section 5.5.4 of the Guidelines).

Some host locations may still be listed as 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' during the application period due to the health risks from the COVID-19 pandemic. Some host locations were already set at 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' prior to COVID-19 due to safety risks. Applicants are strongly discouraged from proposing programs in a host location, or region within a host location, for which *Smartraveller* recommends "Do not travel" or "Reconsider your need to travel" for reasons in addition to the health risks from the COVID-19 pandemic. This distinction is made clear in *Smartraveller*.

Travel cannot proceed to such locations if that travel advice remains in place at the scholar's time of departure.

Lessons learned from previous NCP scholarship rounds

The following general feedback, drawn from comments of assessors who considered each application, may assist applicants in preparing their written application.

Criterion 1: Academic excellence at the tertiary level

Higher scored responses

- demonstrated a dedication to academic achievement, learning and development, and were supported by concrete examples and strong academic references. These responses have included demonstrated creativity, innovation, strong communication skills, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking skills. Some examples may include participation in a competition or a project that required a high level of innovation or problem solving.
- provided evidence of commendations, awards, scholarships, internships, or acceptance into selective academic programs etc, and highlighted how these opportunities developed the applicant's critical thinking skills.

Lower scored responses demonstrated limited achievement beyond standard student experiences or did not make a good case for the applicant's communication skills, higher-order cognitive and critical thinking skills and engagement in learning.

Criterion 2: Leadership and engagement in the community

Higher scored responses

- gave examples of sustained community engagement
- demonstrated longer-term leadership that developed a program/activity/organisation from conception to implementation; and
- showed an effective ability to engage other stakeholders and influence outcomes.

Lower scored responses only outlined participation, without explaining how the applicant contributed to enhanced community outcomes and/or utilised their leadership skills.

Criterion 3: Adaptability and resilience

Higher scored responses

- demonstrated strong self-awareness and identified strategies that applicants used to overcome a range of challenges to achieve success in their academic studies and/or personal life.
- demonstrated insights applicants gained from dealing with challenging situations and consideration of the way in which these would apply to their proposed NCP program, including their ability to thrive in a cross-cultural environment.

Lower scored responses demonstrated limited self-awareness regarding personal growth and development in the face of challenging circumstances, or little understanding of coping mechanisms to adapt or show resilience.

Criterion 4: Ability to contribute to the NCP strategic objective and outcomes

Higher scored responses:

- demonstrated linkages between the applicant's proposed program and the NCP objective and outcomes,
- clearly explained how their interests, proposed program and NCP outcomes intersected
- provided well-considered examples of where/how people-to-people and institutional relationships could be fostered during their time offshore

- demonstrated a broad range of strategies to promote the NCP and the scholar's experiences to a range of stakeholders, both while overseas and as an active alumni member after return to Australia.

Lower scored responses demonstrated limited understanding of the NCP objective and outcomes.

Referees

In previous rounds, some referee reports did not add value to information contained in the applicant's own written application. As referee reports are a critical source of information for the selection process, applicants should try to choose referees that have a good knowledge of the applicant's strengths in relation to the assessment criteria.

Applicants should allow sufficient time for referees to provide a considered report. Further information for applicants, referees and Australian universities regarding the referee report process is provided in the [Guide to Referee Reports in New Colombo Plan Online \(for Applicants and referees\)](#) [PDF 630 KB] | [Word 1.39 MB]

Other considerations

Where applicants are similarly meritorious at both the application and interview stages, preference may be given to applicants proposing longer periods of study and/or an internship/mentorship and/or longer periods of language training. This aligns with the NCP's objective to give scholars a long-term, immersive and comprehensive experience in the Indo-Pacific region. The longer an applicant's program, and the more elements their program includes, the richer their experience is likely to be.

Priority will also be given to applicants who can demonstrate a correlation across their proposed study, language and internship components.

Consideration will also be given to encouraging participation from students from a diverse range of backgrounds including, but not limited to, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, students from a low socio-economic status background, students from regional/remote areas or universities, students who are first in their immediate family to attend university, students across the genders, female students studying in non-traditional fields, students with a disability, and students from a non-English speaking background.

Some NCP host locations may be more popular as study destinations than others. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) will seek to ensure a spread of scholarships across the range of host locations, where possible.

Frequently asked questions

Timing of release of academic results and official academic transcripts

Can the ILO submit a nominee's unofficial academic transcript if the official copy is not yet available at the time of nomination?

Yes. Where official transcripts cannot be provided by the closing of nominations, "unofficial" academic transcripts may be submitted at nominations – e.g. screenshots, with official transcripts to be provided by the applicant in their application.

Required documents

Why is a CV required as part of the NCP scholarship application?

A CV allows the applicant to provide more details on their achievements, beyond their assessment criteria responses, by highlighting their academic achievements/awards, work experience, community engagement activities and extra-curricular interests. The CV enables assessors to gain a clear picture of the applicant's achievements over time (for example, the length of volunteering and community engagement).

The CV also assists DFAT in matching NCP scholars with private sector sponsors (see Section 5.8.4.3 in the NCP Scholarship Program Guidelines).

Police checks

How will police checks be organised for the nominee/applicant?

All nominees are required to undertake a police check. DFAT's contractor will conduct police checks for each nominee following the closing of the nomination period.

In the nomination form, University International Liaison Officers (ILOs) must indicate that the nominee has provided consent for the contractor to conduct a police check.

The contractor will contact the nominee to seek further information and documents such as an Australian passport, driver licence or Medicare card.

Host location

Can my proposed host location in the application be different from that in the nomination?

Yes. The host location selected in the application will be treated as final.

Can a scholar commence their NCP scholarship program with an internship component at a secondary host location prior to their study component at their primary host location?

Yes. A scholar may commence their NCP scholarship program at a secondary host location for up to three months before relocating to the primary host location for the study component, subject to *Smartraveller* advice at time of travel.

The scholar will need to provide confirmation of enrolment for their study component (at their primary host location) prior to departing Australia. The study component is a mandatory component of the NCP scholarship program.

The scholar will also need to ensure that the visa for the primary host location can be granted if they arrive there from the secondary host location (rather than from Australia).

Study component

If I have recently changed degrees or I am in the process of changing to another bachelor or bachelor honours degree, am I still eligible for the NCP scholarship?

Yes, you are eligible, provided your NCP scholarship study component will be fully credit-bearing to your new degree and meet all study component requirements outlined in section 5.2 of the NCP Scholarship Program Guidelines. As per section 7.4 of the Guidelines, your home university must provide a letter attesting to the feasibility of your proposed study component in relation to your new degree.

Do I need confirmation of enrolment at the host university when I submit my NCP scholarship application?

No, you are not required, in the NCP Scholarship application process, to provide confirmation of enrolment at your proposed host university. Please see section 7.4 of the Guidelines regarding attachments required for your study component.

If I am studying a double degree, would one letter attesting to the feasibility of my study component suffice or would I need a separate letter from each faculty?

While one letter is sufficient, if the units will be credit bearing to both degrees, then the one letter should be signed by both faculties (and the University International Liaison Officer) to confirm the feasibility of the proposed study component.

Can I study at a host institution that is an offshore campus of an Australian university?

One of the goals of the NCP program is for linkages to be established between Australian institutions and Indo-Pacific institutions students to have an immersive local experience at their host location, hence we would prefer that the applicant explores all possible locally-based host institutions first. If all such options are exhausted, the applicant may consider a host institution that is an offshore campus of an Australian university as a last resort. If the applicant chooses such a host institution, they must provide documentation that addresses the following in their scholarship application.

- a. there are no local host institutions in the proposed location that offer relevant courses that would receive credit from the home university, and
- b. 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.

Can scholars undertake two study components (i.e. each study component = one semester) at different host institutions and different host locations?

Yes, it is possible to undertake two study components during your NCP scholarship program, where each study component is a semester long.

You may undertake your study components in any of the following combinations:

- two study components at host institution A
- one study component at host institution A and a second study component at host institution B, where both institutions are in the same host location.
- One study component at host institution A and one study component at host institution B, where the host institutions are in different host locations.

The primary host location is where the NCP scholar will undertake their most substantial study component and also spend the most time during their scholarship program. The total time spent at the primary host location must be longer than the total time spent at all secondary host locations combined. Also, the total duration of your NCP scholarship program must not exceed 19 months.

Honours students

I am in the final year of my bachelor degree and would like to undertake an Honours program for my NCP study component. However, enrolment into the Honours program will only open after the closing of the NCP scholarship application period. Am I still eligible?

You are eligible to apply for an NCP scholarship. We ask that you provide as much information on your proposed Honours program as possible at the time of your application e.g a provisional offer for an honours program conditional on your bachelor degree results; a confirmed honours supervisor, a proposed honours project, confirmation from your home university that your proposed NCP study component will be credit bearing to your home honours degree. The award of your scholarship will be conditional on your enrolment into an honours program at your home university.

Do I need to enrol at the host institution if I'm undertaking only a research-based Honours study component i.e. no coursework?

You do not need to enrol at the host institution if you are undertaking only a research-based Honours study component i.e. no coursework.

If you will be undertaking coursework as part of your NCP study component, you must enrol at the host institution, and ensure your home university credits the coursework units back to the home degree.

Referees

Is it permissible to nominate two academic referees?

Yes. It is permissible for both referees to be academic referees, as long as they can comment substantively across the assessment criteria.

Can I nominate a referee from high school?

You are required to nominate an academic referee who is able to comment substantively on the assessment criteria, particularly the criterion on academic excellence at the tertiary level. An academic from your university, rather than from your high school, will likely be better placed to comment on this criterion. However, you may nominate a personal referee from your high school if they are able to comment on the remaining criteria.

Does my academic referee have to be from my current home university?

Generally, yes. However, if, for example, your academic referee has recently left your home university, you may still nominate them, as long as they can comment substantively on the assessment criteria. If you have recently changed home universities, you may nominate an academic referee from your previous home university, provided they can comment substantively on the assessment criteria.

If I have changed courses at university recently, can I nominate an academic referee from a previous course?

Yes, provided they can comment substantively on the assessment criteria.

Does my academic referee have to comment on the non-academic related assessment criteria?

You should select an academic referee who can comment substantively on all assessment criteria wherever possible. However, if your academic referee is only able to comment on the academic-related assessment criteria, they can leave blank the response to the remaining assessment criteria. Your personal referee must be able to comment substantively on the remaining assessment criteria.

Students studying remotely or virtually may find it difficult to nominate an academic referee as they may have had very little interaction with academics on campus. What advice would you give?

In such cases, your academic referee may comment only on the first criterion (academic excellence at the tertiary level) and leave one or all of the other criteria blank (if they are unable to comment on them). Applicants should ensure their other referee is able to comment substantively on the remaining criteria.

Can referees save their draft report and complete it later?

The referee may save each completed section of the report and return to the report at a later stage. The referee does not need to complete the entire referee report in one session.

My referee has accidentally submitted their incomplete report. Is it possible for the referee to resume the report?

Referees cannot edit a report once it has been submitted. However, the applicant can remove the referee from their application (select the "Remove" button) and re-enter the referee's details. The referee will receive an email containing a new link and password to start a new report.

Internships**Do I have to confirm or lock in internships during the application stage?**

No, any internships in your application do not need to be confirmed. However, we encourage you to conduct research, speak to NCP alumni, and make enquiries with potential internship host organisations on possible internship opportunities, and include the details of these potential internships in your application. You should demonstrate that you have given thought to possible internships and how they align with your study/career goals and the NCP program objective and outcomes.

The NCP Internship and Mentorship Network (website) will be available for scholars to identify internship and mentorship opportunities. It is not available to applicants.

Can I undertake an internship at a host location that is different from where I will undertake the study component?

Yes, you may undertake an internship at a secondary host location (subject to *Smarttraveller* advice), provided the total time spent at the primary host location is longer than the total time spent at all secondary host locations combined. Please state how your proposed program components will achieve your study/career goals and NCP program objective and outcomes.

Given that scholars need to commence their NCP scholarship program between 1 January and 15 December of the scholarship round year, is it possible to undertake a full-time internship at the host location from say mid December of the scholarship round year and only commence the study component in March of the following year?

Yes. For example, if you commence your NCP scholarship program with a full-time internship component or language training component on 15 December 2023, then the latest you may commence your study component is 15 March 2024.

As per section 5.1(a) of the guidelines, your study component must commence within three months of commencing your scholarship program subject to international travel restrictions.

Is there a limit to the number of internships I can undertake during the NCP scholarship program?

There is no limit to the number of internships you can complete provided they meet the requirements stated in section 5.3 of the Guidelines.

Visas

Do I need to find out about visas during the application stage?

No. You only need to seek advice regarding visas if you are awarded an NCP scholarship. If you are awarded an NCP scholarship, you will need to organise a visa for your host location by contacting the relevant diplomatic mission/s to seek up-to-date advice on the appropriate visas for your program.



New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program

2022 Round

Advice to Applicants

The 2022 New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program Guidelines provide information on the 2022 round including eligibility requirements, assessment criteria and how funding will be allocated to successful applicants.

- You must read the Guidelines on [GrantConnect](#) before completing an application.
- Applicants should consider the Guidelines together with the Sample 2022 Scholarship Agreement available on GrantConnect
- Key changes to the 2022 Round (see below)
- Lessons learned from previous rounds to assist applicants for the 2022 round (see below)
- Frequently asked questions – NCP scholarship applications (see below)

Key changes in the 2022 round

A number of updates have been made to the 2022 NCP Program Round. These are reflected in the Guidelines and aim to ensure consistency with the Australian Government's requirements for grant administration and reflect new policies in Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the NCP.

These updates include:

- Reference to DFAT engaging a Managed Administration and Support Services Provider to deliver support services throughout the NCP scholarship lifecycle, including during the application period, while scholars are on award and when they transition to the NCP Alumni Program (section 2.4)
- Revert the maximum number of nominees per Australian university to 10 students (from 13 students in the previous round) (section 4.2)
- Clarification that Australian universities must work with their applicants to undertake risk assessments of host locations proposed by applicants and scholars (see Section 2.4 and 5.5.4).
- Change in the weighting of assessment criteria to better reflect the NCP strategic objective and outcomes (section 6.1)
- The nomination period is six weeks (up from four weeks) and the application period is three weeks (down from four weeks) (section 7.5)

Host location eligibility

NCP scholarship programs cannot proceed in a Host Location or region within a host location for which the [Smartraveller](#) advice is 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel'" (see section 5.5 of the Guidelines).

It is anticipated that many host locations will still be listed as 'Do not travel' during the application period due to the health risks from the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant disruptions to global travel. Some locations were already set at 'Do not travel' prior to COVID-19 due to the risk to safety. Applicants may propose programs for travel to 'Do not travel' locations, but are strongly discouraged from proposing programs in a Host Location, or region within a Host Location, for which *Smartraveller* recommends "Do not travel" for reasons in addition to the health risks from the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant disruptions to global travel. This distinction is made clear in *Smartraveller*.

Travel cannot proceed to such locations if that travel advice remains in place at the proposed time of departure.

Lessons learned from previous rounds to assist applicants for the 2022 round

The following general feedback on responding to the assessment criteria might assist universities in nominating applicants, and applicants in preparing their written application.

Criterion 1: Academic excellence at the tertiary level

In past rounds, higher scored responses demonstrated a dedication to academic achievement, learning and development, and were supported by concrete examples and strong academic references. These responses have included demonstrated creativity, innovation, strong communication skills, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking skills. Some examples may include participation in a competition or a project that required a high level of innovation or problem solving.

Higher scored responses also provided evidence of commendations/ awards/scholarships/ internships/ acceptance into selective academic programs etc and specifically highlighted how these opportunities developed the applicant's critical thinking skills.

Lower scored responses demonstrated limited achievement beyond standard student experiences or did not make a good case for the applicant's communication skills, higher-order cognitive and critical thinking skills and engagement in learning.

Criterion 2: Leadership and engagement in the community

Higher scored responses demonstrated a diversity of community engagement or longer-term leadership that developed a program/activity/organisation from conception to implementation and showed an effective ability to engage other stakeholders and influence outcomes. Lower scored responses outlined participation only, without demonstrating how the applicant's engagement contributed to enhanced community outcomes and/or utilised their leadership skills.

Criterion 3: Adaptability and resilience

Higher scored responses demonstrated strong self-awareness and identified strategies that applicants used to overcome a range of challenges to achieve success in their academic studies and/or personal life. Higher scored responses demonstrated insights applicants gained from dealing with challenging situations and consideration of the way in which these would apply to their proposed NCP program, including their ability to thrive in a cross-cultural environment. Lower scored responses demonstrated a lack of self-awareness regarding personal growth and

development in the face of challenging circumstances, and little understanding of coping mechanisms to adapt or show resilience in response to change.

Criterion 4: Ability to contribute to the NCP strategic objective and outcomes

Higher scored responses demonstrated linkages between the applicant's proposed program and the NCP objective and outcomes, clearly identifying how their interests, proposed program and NCP outcomes intersected, and provided well-considered examples of where/how people-to-people and institutional relationships could be fostered. Higher scored responses demonstrated a broad range of strategies identified by applicants to promote the NCP and scholar experiences to a range of stakeholders, both while overseas and as an active alumni member after return to Australia. Lower scored responses demonstrated little understanding of the NCP objective and outcomes.

Other considerations

In some cases, referee reports did not provide additional value to information provided in the applicant's own written application. As referee reports are a critical source of information for the selection process, applicants should choose referees carefully, ensuring that they have a good knowledge of the applicant's abilities in relation to the assessment criteria. Applicants should allow sufficient time for referees to provide a considered report. Further information for applicants, referees and Australian Universities regarding the referee report process is provided in the [Guide to Referee Reports in New Colombo Plan Online \(for Applicants and referees\) \[PDF 630 KB\] | \[Word 1.39 MB\]](#)

The interview questions reflect the assessment criteria. Applicants are strongly encouraged to prepare and practise for their interviews ahead of time. A number of universities have assisted students by running mock interviews or including an interview in their nomination process.

Where applicants are similarly meritorious at both the application and interview stages, preference is given to applicants proposing longer periods of study and/or an internship/mentorship and/or longer periods of language training. This aligns with the NCP's objective to give scholars a long-term and comprehensive experience in the Indo-Pacific region. The longer an applicant's program, and the more elements their program includes, the richer their experience is likely to be. Priority will also be given to applicants who can demonstrate a correlation across their proposed study, language and internship components.

Consideration will also be given to encouraging representation from diverse student groups including but not limited to, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, students from a low socio-economic status background, students from regional/remote areas or universities, students who are first in their immediate family to attend university, students across the genders, female students studying in non-traditional fields, students with a disability, and students from a non-English speaking background.

Some NCP locations are more popular than others. While there are no caps on the number of scholarships awarded per host location, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) will seek to ensure a spread across host locations where possible.

Frequently asked questions – NCP scholarship applications

Police checks

What police check should I request?

Applicants are required to undertake an [AFP national police check](#). Under 'purpose of check' in the police check form, please select "Other Commonwealth purpose only". If there's an option to provide more detail, please state the reason as "Australian Government New Colombo Plan Scholarship application requirement". A fingerprint check is not required.

Alternatively, you may also undertake an [ACIC police check](#).

When do applicants need to provide their police check results?

University International Liaison Officers (ILOs) must indicate in the nomination form whether a police check has been undertaken for the nominee/applicant. If there is an adverse finding, the police check report must be uploaded in the nomination form. Otherwise, a police check does not need to be uploaded or provided to DFAT.

If by the end of the nomination period the police check report has not been received, the ILO should select "Police check initiated" in the nomination form. These nominees must provide their police check reports to their ILOs by the end of the application period; and if there is an adverse finding, the ILO must provide the report to DFAT.

Host location

Can my proposed host location in the application be different from that in the nomination?

Yes. Please see advice above regarding host location eligibility.

Can a scholar commence their NCP scholarship program with an internship component at a secondary host location prior to their study component at their primary host location?

A scholar may commence their NCP scholarship program at a secondary host location for up to three months before relocating to the primary host location for the study component, subject to Smartraveller advice at time of travel.

The scholar will need to provide confirmation of enrolment for their study component (at their primary host location) prior to commencement of their NCP scholarship program and prior to departing Australia.

The scholar will also need to ensure that the visa for the primary host location can be granted if they arrive there from their secondary host location (rather than from Australia).

Study component

If I have recently changed degrees or I am in the process of changing to another bachelor or bachelor honours degree, am I still eligible for the NCP scholarship?

Yes, you are eligible provided your NCP scholarship study component will be fully credit-bearing to your new degree and meet all study component requirements outlined in section 5.2 of the NCP Scholarship Program Guidelines. As per section 7.4 of the Guidelines, your home university must provide a letter attesting to the feasibility of your proposed study component in relation to your new degree.

Do I need confirmation of enrolment at the host university when I submit my NCP scholarship application?

In your NCP scholarship application, we do not require confirmation of enrolment at your proposed host university. Please see section 7.4 of the Guidelines regarding attachments required for your study component.

If I am studying a double degree, would one letter attesting to the feasibility of my study component suffice or would I need a separate letter from each faculty?

One letter is sufficient, but if the units will be credit bearing to both degrees, then the one letter should be signed by both faculties (and the University International Liaison Officer) to confirm the feasibility of the proposed study component.

Can I study at a host institution that is an offshore campus of an Australian university?

One of the goals of the NCP program is for students to have an immersive local experience at their host location, hence we would prefer that the applicant explores all possible locally-based host institutions first. If all such options are exhausted, the applicant may consider a host institution that is an offshore campus of an Australian university as a last resort. If the applicant chooses such a host institution, they must provide documentation that addresses the following in their scholarship application.

- a. there are no local host institutions in the proposed location that offer relevant courses that would receive credit from the home university, and
- b. the offshore campus offers a genuine local experience, where Australian students are the minority of the student body and Scholars are taught predominantly by local and international academics.

Can scholars undertake two study components (i.e. each study component = one semester) at different host institutions and different host locations?

Yes, it is possible to undertake two study components during your NCP scholarship program, where each study component is a semester.

You may undertake your study components in any of the following combinations:

- Two study components at host institution A
- One study component at host institution A and a second study component at host institution B, where both institutions are in the same host location.
- One study component at host institution A and a second study component at host institution B, where the host institutions are in different host locations.

The primary host location is where the NCP scholar will spend the most time during their scholarship program. The total time spent at the primary host location must be longer than the total time spent at all secondary host locations combined. Also, the total duration of your NCP scholarship program must not exceed 19 months.

Honours students

I am in the final year of my bachelor degree and would like to undertake an Honours program for my NCP study component. However, enrolment into the Honours program will only open after the closing of the NCP scholarship application period. Am I still eligible?

You are eligible to apply for an NCP scholarship. We ask that you provide as much information on your proposed Honours program as possible at the time of your application e.g a provisional offer for an honours program conditional on your bachelor degree results; a confirmed honours supervisor, a proposed honours project, confirmation from your home university that your proposed NCP study component will be credit bearing to your home honours degree. The award of your scholarship will be conditional on your enrolment into an honours program at your home university.

Do I need to enrol at the host institution if I'm undertaking only a research-based Honours study component i.e. no coursework?

You do not need to enrol at the host institution if you are undertaking only a research-based Honours study component i.e. no coursework.

If you will be undertaking some coursework as part of your NCP study component, you must enrol at the host institution, and ensure your home university credits the coursework units back to the home degree.

Referees

Is it permissible to nominate two academic referees?

At least one report must be prepared by an academic referee. It is permissible for both referees to be academic, as long as they can comment substantively across the assessment criteria.

Can I nominate a referee from high school?

You are required to nominate an academic referee who is able to comment substantively across the assessment criteria especially the first criterion on academic excellence at the tertiary level. An academic from your university, rather than from your high school, will likely be better placed to comment on this criterion. However, you may nominate a personal referee from your high school if they are able to comment on the remaining criteria.

Does my academic referee have to be from my current home university?

Generally, yes. However, if for example, your academic referee has recently left your home university to work elsewhere, you may still nominate them as long as they can comment substantively on the assessment criteria. Or if you have recently changed home universities, you may choose to nominate an academic referee from your previous home university, provided they can comment substantively on the assessment criteria.

If I have changed courses at university recently, can I nominate an academic referee from a previous course?

Yes, provided they can comment substantively on the assessment criteria.

Does my academic referee have to comment on the non-academic related assessment criteria?

You should select an academic referee who can comment substantively on all assessment criteria wherever possible. However, if your academic referee is only able to comment on the academic-related assessment criteria, they can leave the response to the remaining assessment criteria blank. Your personal referee must be able to comment substantively on the remaining assessment criteria.

Students studying their degree remotely or virtually may find it difficult to nominate an academic referee as they may have had very little interaction with academics on campus. What advice would you give?

In such cases, your academic referee may comment only on the first criterion (academic excellence at the tertiary level) and leave the other criterion blank if they are unable to comment on them. Applicants should ensure their other referee is able to comment substantively on the remaining criteria.

Can referees save their draft report and resume later?

Referees must complete their report in one sitting in the NCP Online system; they will not be able to save their work to resume at a later time.

My referee has accidentally submitted their incomplete report. Is it possible for the referee to resume the report?

Referees will not be able to resume their report once they have submitted it. However, the applicant can remove the referee from their application (select the "Remove" button) and re-enter their details. This will then send the referee an email containing a new link and password to start a new report.

Internships

Do I have to confirm or lock in internships during the application stage?

We do not require you to confirm or lock in any internships in your application. However, we encourage you to conduct some research, speak to NCP alumni, and make enquiries with potential internship organisations on possible internship opportunities, and include the details of these potential internships in your application. We like to see that you have given thought to possible internships and how these internships align with your study/career goals and the NCP program objective and outcomes.

The NCP Internship and Mentorship Network will be available for scholars (scholarship recipients) to identify internship and mentorship opportunities; it is not available to applicants.

Can I undertake an internship at a host location that is different from where I will undertake the study component?

Yes, you may undertake an internship at a secondary host location (subject to Smartraveller advice), provided the total time spent at the primary host location is longer than the total time spent at all secondary host locations combined. Please state how your proposed program components will achieve your study/career goals and NCP program objective and outcomes.

I understand scholars must commence their NCP scholarship program between 1 January and 15 December of the round year. Is it possible to undertake a full-time internship at the host location from say 15 December and only commence the study component in March of the following year?

If you are considering commencing your study component in March in the year subsequent to the round year (e.g. you are awarded the scholarship for 2022 but want to commence your study component only in March 2023), you may commence your NCP scholarship program at your host location in December of the round year with an internship component or language training component first (and then commence your study component by March of the following year), subject to international travel restrictions. As per section 5.1(a) of the guidelines, your study

component must commence within three months of commencing your scholarship program subject to international travel restrictions.

For example, if you commence your NCP scholarship program with an internship component or language training component on 15 December 2022, then the latest you must commence your study component is 15 March 2023.

Is there a limit to the number of internships I can undertake during the NCP scholarship program?

Please see section 5.3 of the Guidelines for information on the internship component. There is no limit to the number of internships you can complete provided they meet the requirements stated in section 5.3.

Visas

Do I need to find out about visas during the application stage?

You do not need to conduct research on visas during the application stage.

If you are awarded an NCP scholarship, you will be required to organise a visa for your proposed host location by contacting the relevant diplomatic mission in your state/territory. As visa requirements may change from time to time, we suggest you contact the relevant diplomatic mission for the latest visa advice if you are awarded an NCP scholarship.

Advice to applicants 2021

The 2021 New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program Guidelines provide information on the 2021 round including eligibility requirements, assessment criteria and how funding will be allocated to successful applicants.

- You must read the Guidelines on [GrantConnect](#) before completing an application.
- Applicants should consider the Guidelines together with the Sample 2021 Scholarship Agreement available on GrantConnect
- Key changes to the 2021 Round (see below)
- Lessons learned from previous rounds to assist applicants for the 2021 round (see below)

Key changes in the 2021 round

A number of enhancements have been made to the 2021 NCP Program Round. These are reflected in the Guidelines, and aim to ensure consistency with the Australian Government's requirements for grant administration and reflect new policies in Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the NCP.

These updates include:

- a clearer articulation of the NCP strategic objective and outcomes
- information on reasonable accommodation to facilitate participation of applicants with a disability (section 2.4)
- information about processes when applicants consider they have a strong case for proposing to undertake their scholarship program at a host location listed in Smartraveller as 'Reconsider Your Need to Travel" (section 2.6 and 5.5)
- a requirement for scholarship recipients to register on the [Smartraveller website](#) if a crisis page on the website is activated during a major overseas incident at the scholar's overseas location (section 2.6)
- reference to the new [NCP Media and Publication Guidelines](#) and the [NCP Student Code of Conduct](#) which will be included in the 2021 NCP scholarship agreement to be signed by scholarship recipients (section 2.6)
- advice that applicants are eligible to propose programs in NCP host locations for which they *previously* held citizenship or permanent residency. However, applicants remain ineligible to apply for host locations where they are *current* citizens or permanent residents (section 4.1)
- advice that applicants must not be an employee of the branch of DFAT that administers the NCP, to avoid conflict of interest (section 4.1)

- advice that police checks must not be dated earlier than 1 May 2020 (section 4.2)
- advice that part-time internships may be undertaken concurrently with a full-time language training (section 5.3.1)
- clarification that language training must be undertaken face to face (section 5.4)
- change in the weighting of each assessment criteria to better reflect the NCP strategic objective and outcomes (section 6.1)
- a requirement for scholars to adhere to DFAT's [Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment \(PSEAH\) policy](#) (section 10.3)
- a requirement for scholars to adhere to the [University Foreign Interference Taskforce - Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the University Sector 2019](#) (section 10.3)
- change in the eligible age range to 'between 18 and 30 years of age (inclusive, i.e. under 31 years) for non-Indigenous applicants and between 18 and 35 years of age (inclusive, i.e. under 36 years) for Indigenous applicants on 1 January 2021' (section 4.1(e), see Addendum on [GrantConnect](#))

Lessons learned from previous rounds to assist applicants for the 2021 round

The following general feedback on responding to the assessment criteria might assist universities in nominating applicants, and applicants in preparing their written application.

Criterion 1: Academic excellence at the tertiary level

In past rounds, higher scored responses demonstrated a dedication to academic achievement, learning and development, and were supported by concrete examples and strong academic references. Higher scored responses provided evidence of commendations/ awards/ scholarships/ internships/ acceptance into selective academic programs etc and highlighted how these opportunities developed the applicant's critical thinking skills. Lower scored responses demonstrated limited achievement beyond standard student experiences or did not make a good case for the applicant's communication skills, higher-order cognitive and critical thinking skills and engagement in learning.

Criterion 2: Leadership and engagement in the community

In past rounds, higher scored responses demonstrated a diversity of community engagement or longer-term leadership that developed a program/activity/organisation from conception to implementation and showed an effective ability to engage other stakeholders and influence outcomes. Lower scored

responses outlined participation only, without demonstrating how the applicant's engagement contributed to enhanced community outcomes and/or utilised their leadership skills.

Criterion 3: Adaptability and resilience

In the past, higher scored responses demonstrated strong self-awareness and identified strategies that applicants used to overcome a range of challenges to achieve success in their academic studies and/or personal life. Higher scored responses demonstrated insights applicants gained from dealing with challenging situations and consideration of the way in which these would apply to their proposed NCP program, including their ability to thrive in a cross-cultural environment. Lower scored responses demonstrated a lack of self-awareness regarding personal growth and development in the face of challenging circumstances, and little understanding of coping mechanisms to adapt or show resilience in response to change.

Criterion 4: Ability to contribute to the NCP strategic objective and outcomes

Higher scored responses demonstrated linkages between the applicant's proposed program and the NCP objective and outcomes, clearly identifying how their interests, proposed program and NCP outcomes intersected, and providing well-considered examples of where/how people-to-people and institutional relationships could be fostered. Higher scored responses demonstrated a broad range of strategies identified by applicants to promote the NCP and scholar experiences to a range of stakeholders, both while overseas and as an active alumni member after return to Australia. Lower scored responses demonstrated little understanding of the NCP objective and outcomes.

In some cases, referee reports did not provide additional value to information provided in the applicant's own written application. As referee reports are a critical source of information for the selection process, applicants should choose referees carefully, ensuring that they have a good knowledge of the applicant's abilities in relation to the assessment criteria. Applicants should allow sufficient time for referees to provide a considered report. Further information for applicants, referees and Australian Universities regarding the referee report process is provided in the [Guide to Referee Reports in New Colombo Plan Online \(for Applicants and referees\) \[PDF 630 KB\] | \[Word 1.39 MB\]](#)

The interview questions reflect the assessment criteria. Applicants are strongly encouraged to prepare and practice for their interviews ahead of time. A number of universities have assisted students by running mock interviews or including an interview in their nomination process.

Where applicants are similarly meritorious at both the application and interview stages, preference is given to applicants proposing longer periods of study and/or an internship/mentorship and/or longer periods of language training. This aligns with the NCP's objective to give scholars a long-term and comprehensive experience in the Indo-Pacific region. The longer an applicant's program, and the more elements their program includes, the richer their experience is likely to be. Priority will also be given to applicants who can demonstrate a correlation across their proposed study, language and internship components.

Consideration will also be given to encouraging representation from diverse student groups including but not limited to, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, students from a low socio-economic status background, students from regional/remote areas or universities, students who are first in their immediate family to attend university, students across the genders, female students studying in non-traditional fields, students with a disability, and students from a non-English speaking background.

Some NCP locations are more popular than others. While there are no caps on the number of scholarships awarded per host location, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) will seek to ensure a spread across host locations. In the 2020 round, the locations for which the greatest numbers of applications were received were Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

We strongly discourage applicants from proposing programs in a host location, or region within a host location, for which the Australian Government's [Smartraveller](#) travel advice recommends 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' (except where the travel advice may be short term e.g. due to an unforeseen adverse event). We note that travel cannot proceed to such locations if that travel advice remains in place at the time of departure. Where the Smartraveller travel advice is raised to 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' for a host location during the application process or while a scholar is on program, DFAT will work with the scholar to identify an alternate host location if required.

Thank you for your interest in the 2021 round of the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program.

Advice to applicants 2020

The 2020 New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program Guidelines provide information about the 2020 round including eligibility requirements, how applications will be assessed and how funding will be allocated to successful applicants.

- You must read the [Guidelines](#) before filling out an application.
- Applicants should consider the Guidelines together with the [Sample 2020 Scholarship Agreement \[PDF 1.1 MB\]](#)
- Key changes in the 2020 round
- Lessons learned from previous rounds to assist applicants for the 2020 round

Key changes in the 2020 round

For the 2020 Scholarships round, the Guidelines have been migrated to a different template to comply with new Australian Government grant requirements. Additionally, a number of enhancements have been made to the Scholarship Program for the 2020 round including:

- greater emphasis on encouraging a diverse range of Australian undergraduate students studying a breadth of disciplines as a key objective of the NCP Scholarship Program (sections 2.2 and 4.2)
- removal as eligible NCP Host Locations those destinations listed in Smartraveller as 'Reconsider Your Need to Travel' (in addition to existing restrictions on 'Do Not Travel' destinations (sections 2.6 and 5.5)
- further clarification on the role and responsibilities of the NCP Scholarship Program's Support Service Organisation (section 2.7)
- clarification on the requirements and entitlements in relation to gaps that are permitted during the scholarship program, such as breaks between university semesters are to be treated as gaps and not a continuation of the Study Component (section 5.2 and 5.6)
- clarification of rules for universities in Host Locations to be local universities, unless otherwise approved and the circumstances where this approval may be provided (section 5.2)
- further clarification on the definition of an Internship (section 5.3)
- revision and clarification of entitlements and requirements for study fees and language training fees to be covered by the Scholarship (section 5.8)
- further clarification on the possibility of sponsorships by private sector organisations for some Scholarships (section 5.8)
- a requirement for applicants to work with their Home University NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships as well as their Faculty to submit the necessary documentation to support their application (section 7.4)

- changes to the dates for the opening of the nomination and application periods, brought forward by two weeks in 2020 (section 7.5)
- a requirement for Scholars to adhere to the Child Protection Policy of the Service Provider once on Scholarship (section 10.3).

Lessons learned from previous rounds to assist applicants for the 2020 round

The following generic feedback might assist universities in nominating applicants, and applicants in preparing their written applications.

For applicants who were unsuccessful in previous rounds, there were a range of common areas where responses to the section criteria could have been strengthened, including:

- Criterion 1, which relates to applicants' academic excellence at the tertiary level, has two components: i) the applicant's university grades which are automatically factored into the overall score, and ii) the written element of this criterion asks about the applicant's ungraded, academic achievements at the tertiary level. Applications that were not shortlisted often did not demonstrate sufficient evidence of a student's academic excellence that goes beyond university grades or did not make a good case for the applicant's communication skills, higher-order cognitive and critical thinking skills and engagement in learning.
- Criterion 2 asks applicants to demonstrate that they have exercised leadership and engagement in the community. Responses that have scored poorly in the past did not articulate how the applicant demonstrated leadership skills or was in a position of leadership as opposed to being a participant in a group or role. Responses that have scored well demonstrated both an active engagement in the community via multiple roles as well as leadership roles (whether formally assigned or not).
- Criterion 3 asks applicants to demonstrate their potential to adapt and thrive in a foreign environment and their resilience in the face of challenges. Strong answers to this criterion have included concrete examples of these qualities, and strategies employed to manage adversity, and an understanding of what it means to deal with change, or operate in a foreign environment. Applicants who have never travelled overseas before can, and have, provided strong responses to this criterion, for example, by discussing challenges or changes they have faced in Australia.
- Criterion 4 asks applicants to detail how they can contribute to the NCP's objectives as set in the 2020 Scholarship Program Guidelines. Responses that have scored poorly against this particular criterion have not demonstrated that the applicant understands the objectives of the NCP or focus solely on

how the program would benefit the applicant, rather than focusing on how the applicant's program would help support the goals of the NCP. Responses that have tended to score well against this particular criterion have clearly demonstrated how the applicant will contribute to NCP goals over time and as an alumnus.

In some cases, referee reports did not provide additional value to information provided in the applicant's own written application. As referee reports are a critical source of information for the selection process, applicants should choose referees carefully, ensuring that they have a good knowledge of the applicant's abilities in relation to the selection criteria. Applicants should provide sufficient time for referees to produce a considered report. Further information for applicants, referees and Australian Universities regarding the referee report process is provided in the [Guide to Referee Reports in New Colombo Plan Online \(for Applicants and referees\) \[PDF 630 KB\] | \[Word 1.39 MB\]](#).

The interview questions always reflect the criteria and applicants are strongly encouraged to prepare and practice for their interviews ahead of time. A number of universities have assisted students by running mock interviews, or may include an interview in their nomination process.

Where applicants are similarly meritorious at both the application and interview stages, preference is given to applicants proposing longer periods of study and/or an internship/mentorship and/or longer periods of language training. This aligns with the NCP's objective to give scholars a long-term and comprehensive experience in the Indo-Pacific region. It follows that the longer an applicant's stay, and the more elements their program includes, the richer their experience is likely to be. Priority will also be given to applicants who can demonstrate a correlation across their proposed study, language and internship components.

Consideration will also be given to encouraging representation from diverse student groups including but not limited to, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, students from a Low Socio-economic Status background, students from Regional/Remote areas or universities, students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, students across the Genders, female students in non-traditional fields, or students with a Disability.

Some locations are more popular than others. While there are no caps on the number of scholarships awarded per host location, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) will seek to ensure a spread across host locations. In the 2019 round, the locations for which the greatest numbers of applications were received were Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, China and the Republic of Korea.

Thank you for your interest in the 2020 round of the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program.

DFAT ENTERPRISE PERFORMANCE MONITORING METHODOLOGY CONTROL DOCUMENT – VERSION 2

Performance Measure 3 – Increased number and diversity of Australian university undergraduates with Indo-Pacific capability

UNDERTAKING AND APPROVAL

I, Elizabeth Wilde, First Assistant Secretary of Development Policy Division, declare that:

1. The information presented in this methodology control document is true and correct,
2. Methodologies used to verify performance results meet requirements under Section 16EA of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* (see below)
3. Data and records will be properly maintained, and
- 4 I understand business units within my division may be required to provide evidence to the ANAO to support performance results and other information as part of the ANAO's annual audit of the department's Annual Performance Statements.

Signature Elizabeth Wilde Date 24 4 2024

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

Section 16EA of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* states that performance measures must:

- a) **relate directly** to the department's purpose or, one or more of the department's key activities, and
- b) use sources of information and methodologies that are **reliable and verifiable**; and
- c) provide an **unbiased basis** for the measurement and assessment of performance; and
- d) where reasonably practicable, comprise a mix of **qualitative and quantitative measures**, and
- e) include measures of **outputs, efficiency and effectiveness** if those things are appropriate measures of performance, and
- f) provide a basis for an assessment of **performance over time**.

Performance Measure 3 – Increased number and diversity of Australian university undergraduates with Indo-Pacific capability	
Section One: Performance Measure information – Version 2	
Accountable Officer	Elizabeth Wilde, First Assistant Secretary, Development Policy Division
Line area contact details	Jane Chandler, Assistant Secretary, Global Programs and Partnerships Branch Liam Cosgrave, Director, New Colombo Plan Secretariat
Contributors to Performance	NCS/GPB/DPD OBS/GPB/DPD Contracted program delivery service provider (Palladium) Australian universities Participating Australian undergraduates NCP partner organisations, including host universities and internship hosts DFAT Posts for NCP host locations
PBS Program	Program 1.5 – New Colombo Plan – Transforming Regional Relationships advances Australia’s interests and bilateral relationships through enduring people-to-people, institutional and business links with the Indo-Pacific region.
PBS Key Activity associated with the Performance Measure s16EA(a)	Negotiate and advocate internationally and provide international policy advice.
Performance Measure Rationale s16EA(a)	<p>The strategic objective of the New Colombo Plan (NCP) is to strengthen Australia’s regional standing by building a diverse cohort of Australian alumni with deeper Indo-Pacific knowledge, capability and connections.</p> <p>The Performance Measure ‘Increased number and diversity of Australian university undergraduates with Indo-Pacific capability’ directly relates to the strategic objective and advancing Australia’s capacity to negotiate and advocate internationally, through the connections and understanding developed by more than 41,000 Australians who have completed outbound NCP programs (scholarships and mobility projects) in the Indo-Pacific between 2014 and June 2023.</p> <p>Rationale for choosing the target of 8,000 completions in 2023-24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the length of the program, completions have averaged approximately 4,500 students per year. There have, however, been significant variations (e.g. 2014 was a pilot year with only four eligible host locations and COVID-related travel restrictions severely impacted the program in affected years). There were approximately 6,000 completions in 2022-23 (increasing from approx. 35,000 to 41,000 total alumni). As post-COVID recovery of international university mobility programs continues in 2023-24, we anticipate participation, and therefore completions, will continue to increase.

Note To help create a stream of students with long-term immersive experiences in the Indo-Pacific, the NCP has increased its focus on supporting longer-term mobility projects. This may correlate with fewer mobility grants being awarded, for a longer average period each.

In future years, there may be value in revisiting PPR1, to measure the total amount of time NCP participants spend in host locations rather than the raw number of alumni.

Planned Performance
Result 1 (PPR1)

8,000 Australian university undergraduates complete an NCP program to the Indo-Pacific region in 2023-24.

PPR1 will be measured by the number of Australian university undergraduates who have travelled for the purpose of completing an NCP program in the Indo-Pacific by the end of 2023-24.

The data sources for this measure will be ISEO and EOL. These two IT platforms are managed by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DFAT. ISEO is used by Australian universities to apply for funding, and manage funded mobility projects, including data entry for participating students. EOL is used by DFAT and universities to manage NCP scholarship nominations, applications and scholars' program activities.

Baseline: 41,000 completions

The baseline for this measurement is the total of Australian university undergraduates who had completed an NCP program to the Indo-Pacific region from the program's commencement in 2014 until 30 June 2023.

2023-24 target: 49,000 total completions (8,000 increase)

The target includes undergraduates who complete an NCP program across the scholarship and mobility programs, and anticipates a continued increase in program participation post COVID.

Planned Performance
Result 2 (PPR2)

Diversity measures for First Nations, disability and regional/remote students are equal to or greater than in the broader Australian university undergraduate cohort.

2023-24 diversity measure targets are
First Nations 2.1%
Disability 11.4%
Regional/remote 18.0%

The NCP Scholarship Program – 2024 Round Guidelines (Section 4.2 and 6.2(c)) encourage representation from diverse student groups. PPR2 will be measured by the percentage of Australian university undergraduates (disaggregated by First Nations, disability, and regional/remote) who complete an NCP program to the Indo-Pacific in

	<p>2023-24 compared with the same measures of the broader Australian university undergraduate cohort</p> <p>The targets are equal to the broader Australian university undergraduate cohort in 2022. Source statistics are published annually by the Department of Education and represent the most recent comparable national data</p> <p>Each year, these diversity measure targets will be updated to reflect the most recent available data on the broader undergraduate cohort</p> <p>Definitions are outlined in the NCP Scholarship Program - 2024 Round Guidelines Glossary (Section 14)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations <i>'a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which they live, or formerly lived'</i> • Disability <i>'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'</i> • Regional/remote <i>'a region designated as regional or remote by the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard'</i>
<p>Forward Year Planned Performance Results (PPRs)</p>	<p>PPR1 2023-24 49,000 completions (increase of 8,000) Forward year planned PPRs 2024-25 56,000 completions (increase 7,000) 2025-26 63,000 completions (increase 6,000) 2026-27 68,000 completions (increase 5,000)</p> <p>See note at 'rationale' (above) regarding reduced number of expected completions in forward years</p> <p>PPR2 Subject to source statistics published by the Department of Education</p>
<p>Basis for assessment of performance over time s16EA(f)</p>	<p>PPR1 The number of Australian university undergraduates who complete an NCP program will be measured annually to align with the annual grant/scholarship rounds. The completion rate will be assessed through data from ISEO and EOL</p> <p>PPR2 The diversity of Australian university undergraduates who undertake an NCP program will be measured annually and compared to the broader Australian university cohort, which is published by the Department of Education</p>
<p>Measurement Type s16EA(e)</p>	<p>Output</p>

Measurement Base s16EA(d)	Quantitative
Verifiable and Unbiased Methodology s16EA(b)(c)	<p>NCP data for PPR1 and PPR2 is collected from government-managed database systems (ISEO and EOL). These two platforms will be the primary source of raw data for reporting on the Annual Performance Statements until the new DFAT managed IT system, ONE Education is operational.</p> <p>DFAT has outsourced monitoring and evaluation services to Palladium (formerly Scope Global) through the contract for provision of Managed Administrative and Support Services for the New Colombo Plan (May 2021- 30 June 2025). Palladium is contracted to operationalise the NCP Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (MELF) through data collection, analysis and reporting to assist DFAT understand whether the NCP is achieving its intended results. Palladium are guided by DFAT's Monitoring and Evaluation Standards.</p> <p>Palladium will undertake data extraction, processing, analysis and reporting of data used for reporting on PPR1 and PPR2.</p> <p>Palladium will continue to be consulted on the design and build of ONE Education by DFAT and its contracted experts to ensure it is fit for purpose. This will include direct onsite engagement with Palladium who utilise the two platforms on a regular basis.</p> <p>For NCP Scholarships, data is collected through students' scholarship applications, and analysed by Palladium for DFAT in its annual reporting. The 'End of Round' and 'Annual' reports are contract deliverables submitted and quality assured by Palladium.</p> <p>For NCP Mobility, data is collected through project applications, universities' input of student data and completion reports. These are analysed for DFAT in Monthly, End of Round, and Annual reports, which are contract deliverables submitted and quality assured by Palladium.</p> <p>Relevant external references include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Attachment A</u>: Palladium's Process Guide – Reporting on Performance Measure 3. • Department of Education National data on the broader undergraduate cohort is available on its website and is used to set annual targets for PPR2. It will be a primary source for reporting in the Annual Performance Statements. • Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, universities and other professional bodies may be used as secondary sources to verify and contextualise results.

Progress reporting and definitions of ratings	<p>PPR1: Annual Performance Statement</p> <p>Target met: 100% of target achieved (increase of 8,000 or more NCP program completions).</p> <p>Target substantially met. 80% and above of target met (increase of at 6,400 or more NCP program completions).</p> <p>Target partially met: Between 60% and 80% of target met (increase of at between 4,800 and 6,400 program completions).</p> <p>Target not met Below 60% of target met (increase of less than 4,800 program completions)</p> <p>PPR2: Annual Performance Statement</p> <p>Target met: First Nations: 2.1% and above Disability. 11.4% and above Regional/remote: 18.0% and above</p> <p>Target not met: First Nations Below 2 1% Disability Below 11.4% Regional/remote Below 18 0%</p> <p>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</p> <p>Achieved - when 2 PPRs are achieved</p> <p>Partially achieved - when 1 PPR achieved, and 1 PPR not achieved.</p> <p>Not achieved - neither PPR met</p>
Potential limitations	<p>Until 2019, the NCP was administered by the Department of Education, using existing database systems, which had been designed for other international scholarship and mobility programs. This potentially limits the scope of data available for current NCP systems (ISEO and EOL) For example, university officers must input information for students on NCP mobility projects and may not know, or for privacy reasons not be authorised, to input all diversity details. For the scholarship program students confirm their own details, so diversity information is more likely to be up-to-date and accurate.</p> <p>To mitigate this, DFAT is developing a new database system (ONE Education) through expert contractors. ONE Education will be managed by DFAT and will replace ISEO and EOL It is expected to be operational in 2025-26.</p> <p>DFAT and DEWR are in the process of moving the NCP systems from DEWR to DFAT. In 2023-24, DFAT and the DEWR will enter a revised MoU to facilitate implementation of the ONE Education data migration</p>

strategy. This strategy includes data cleansing as a key action following receipt of the data and via regular updates until the system is operational.

Risk/s

Risk description: External event restricts travel

Risk rating: Low

Impact: In-country programs may not be possible

Mitigations: Investigate alternative delivery options (e.g. the program pivoted to include virtual delivery of mobility projects during COVID-related travel restrictions)

Risk description: Data quality impacted by low response rates and/or input compliance/accuracy

Risk rating: Low

Impact: Data quality suffers

Mitigations: Universities are required to input complete student data before any NCP-related travel. DFAT and Palladium work with universities and students to improve data quality. For example, in addition to weekly data reporting and quarterly forums conducted by DFAT and Palladium with all participating universities. Also, DFAT bi-monthly newsletters to universities provide information on improving data quality. DFAT and Palladium monitor performance results at formal contracted quarterly Director Management Group meetings including presentations by Palladium's Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser and Coordinator. DFAT and Palladium prepare clear guidance for students and universities on data quality.

DFAT is commissioning a dedicated IT system (ONE Education) to secure higher data quality from 2025-26.

Risk description: Implementation of policy to give preference to longer-term projects may result fewer mobility grants (for a longer average duration)

Risk rating: Low

Impact: While this may result in fewer mobility grants overall, the expected impact of a higher percentage of long-term projects would be to enhance the program's policy objective of deepening people-to-people and institutional partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.

Mitigations:

1) Communications to ensure stakeholders understand that the potential lower number of mobility grants is aligned with a goal for longer projects with deeper and more on-going connections in the region.

2) Consideration to updating Performance Measure to align with target of supporting longer-term programs (see 'rationale' above).

	<p>Risk description: Funding for program reduced.</p> <p>Risk rating: Low</p> <p>Impact: Less funding for scholarships and mobility projects</p> <p>Mitigations: Reassess performance measure in the context of available funding.</p>
Quality Assurance	<p>Palladium is contracted to manage monitoring and evaluation of program performance and related quality assurance processes.</p> <p>DFAT will ensure Palladium is familiar with the new performance measure targets for 2023-24 and associated quarterly and annual reporting requirements. The NCP Monitoring and Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) Plan 2023-25 and Annual Workplans will be updated accordingly. Palladium will continue to be consulted on the design and build of ONE Education to ensure it is fit for purpose.</p> <p>DFAT manages quality data entry via the NCP Grant Guidelines and Round instructions, ILO forums, regular newsletters and training.</p>
Agreed changes and justification	<p>This is a new measure in 2023-24 as part of DFAT's update of performance measures, endorsed by the Executive Committee on 8 March 2023 and published in the 2023-24 Portfolio Budget Statements.</p> <p>In 2022-23 the related measure was <i>The New Colombo Plan delivers improved people-to-people, institutional and business links.</i></p>

OFFICIAL

Data source(s) s16EA(b)	Evidence of the data source to be provided for performance reporting s16EA(b)	Data source reliability and verifiability s16EA(b)	Data owner(s)	Record location of the data source s16EA(b)	Frequency of data collection	Reporting
<i>List each contributing data source (including case studies) that supports the analysis of performance against this measure.</i>	<i>What data will be used to demonstrate the performance against the PPR (raw, processed, report etc).</i>	<i>How is the data collected, what is the trail of analysis to get to the result, and what controls are in place to maintain reliability of data.</i>	<i>Original owner of the data and, if applicable, who is the custodian in DFAT.</i>	<i>EDRMS (or other) references for each data source.</i>	<i>Frequency of data collection (annual, bi-annually, quarterly, monthly or in response to stakeholder or other requirements during the reporting period).</i>	<i>Will the data be used for quarterly internal reporting, Annual reporting for the Annual Performance Statement, or both?</i>
EOL	Student diversity Scholarship program completion Fields of study Location of study Diversity of students	Data is collected through students' scholarship applications and analysed in the Contractor's End of Round and Annual reports. The database is managed and maintained by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), which has appropriate data security policy and process.	DFAT, NCS (noting system is owned and maintained by DEWR)	22/31091	Once a year during the scholarship round in August	Annual
ISEO (online system)	Student diversity Mobility project completion Location of study Field of study Diversity of students	Data is collected through project applications, universities' input of student data and universities' completion reports, and analysed in the Contractor's Monthly, End of Round, and Annual reports. The database is managed and maintained by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), who has appropriate data security policy and process.	DFAT, NCS (noting system is owned and maintained by DEWR)	22/31091	Monthly	Annual
Department of Education	Student diversity	Published Department of Education Higher Education Statistics	Department of Education	https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/2022-section-11-equity-groups and https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/2022-section-6-indigenous-students	Annual	Annual