



Australian Government



NEW COLOMBO PLAN

*Connect to Australia's future - study in the region*

# 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](http://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 AU<sup>1</sup>\$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

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<sup>1</sup> All figures are in Australian dollars.

## 1.2.2 New Colombo Plan Budget<sup>2</sup>

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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.education.gov.au/privacy) or contact [privacy@education.gov.au](mailto:privacy@education.gov.au)
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – [www.dfat.gov.au/privacy.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/privacy.html) or contact [privacy@dfat.gov.au](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:ncp.scholarships@education.gov.au). The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade can be contacted at [ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au](mailto: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.