



Australia Awards

Learn | Link | Lead

Australia Awards Linkages Framework Overview





A photograph of a woman and a man walking and smiling in a hallway. The woman is on the left, wearing a red top and a grey jacket. The man is on the right, wearing a blue checkered shirt and a dark jacket. The background shows a hallway with arched doorways and other people in the distance.

The Australia Awards
drives personal and
professional connections
and relationships
forged by Australia
Awards scholars and the
Australian community

For over 60 years, the Australian Government has supported the education of emerging leaders from across the world.

Foreword

Australia Awards scholarships are administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The Australia Awards offer the next generation of global leaders an opportunity to undertake study, research and professional development that will help them contribute to the development of their home countries. Students acquire knowledge and skills, and cultivate networks across a range of areas, including engineering, education, health, agriculture and public sector management.

The *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* highlights the importance of creating enduring regional and people-to-people ties in our region. It commits to helping Australia Awards scholars build lasting personal and professional links with Australia.

This framework builds on the Australia Awards Global Strategy to amplify the importance of on-award engagement. It captures the ambition we have for Australia Awards scholars to develop enduring personal and professional links with Australian organisations and individuals.

The Australia Awards complement the work of the Government's New Colombo Plan, which supports Australian undergraduates to live, study and work in the Indo-Pacific region. Australia's international alumni are influencers and leaders in their home countries, and through our Global Alumni Strategy, we grow a community that strengthens and maintains our regional connections.

This framework provides a broad platform supporting scholars to build both their professional and soft skills, make new connections while in Australia, and access an extensive range of development opportunities beyond the acquisition of their tertiary qualification.

Education is a key soft power asset for Australia. This framework will help scholars foster enduring links with Australia, and use their connections to promote mutually beneficial outcomes for Australia and their home countries.

Connecting with Australia

A photograph of two young women with long dark hair, smiling warmly. They are outdoors, with a beach and ocean in the background. The woman on the left is wearing a light blue shirt, and the woman on the right is wearing a bright pink top. The woman on the right has her arm around the shoulder of the woman on the left.

The Australia Awards has brought generations of emerging leaders to Australia to undertake study, research, and professional development.

In addition to receiving a world-class education, the Australian Government aims to enhance the personal and professional connections and relationships forged by Australia Awards scholars and the Australian community.

The imperative for this framework is to outline the Government's strategic vision and objectives highlighted in the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper for enhancing and harnessing these links.

This framework comprises this strategic overview, a good practice guide for delivery partners, and a linkages guide for scholars. It will also support tools and fora for sharing innovative ideas and best practice.

The Australia Awards are delivered and supported by many stakeholders, including Australian academic institutions, various Australian Government departments and agencies, the private sector, community groups and cultural organisations, and Australia Awards scholars themselves.

All delivery partners play a crucial role in building and enhancing linkages, including creating and delivering activities.

Many positive activities already exist, and many are under development. Opportunities to forge strong links are also being offered by organisations and groups outside of the immediate Australia Awards ecosystem.

Activities can be formal, such as organised internship or mentorship activities, or informal, such as community language groups or business networking.

The framework does not seek to duplicate these, nor directly manage or control them. The framework seeks to amplify the importance of on-award engagement. It seeks to harness activities and opportunities, and work towards increasing awareness and access for all Australia Awards scholars.



Acknowledging the high calibre and diverse background of Australia Awards scholars, the process of connecting and forging links with Australia will be self-driven and unique to each recipient.

DFAT will ensure that all Australia Awards scholars are equipped to identify linkage opportunities, and make the best use of them.

Activities and opportunities can be categorised into three tiers

- foundation—paving the way for successful linkages engagement
- elective—activities offering additional opportunities to all Australia Awards recipients
- targeted—activities for select groups or categories of Australia Awards recipients.

Where gaps exist or additional support could benefit strategic priority areas, DFAT may—either directly or in partnership—provide extra resources or develop new, targeted activities. An example of this is the Australia Awards Women’s Leadership Initiative, connecting emerging leaders from the Pacific with senior Australian mentors.

DFAT will support and encourage stakeholders to share information and access to linkage opportunities, as widely as possible, through new and existing channels.

The Australia Awards stakeholder forum will encourage collaboration, sharing of best practice and exploring new ideas.

While the framework focusses on the ‘in-Australia’ experience of Australia Awards scholars, it also takes a wide view.

It recognises that the process of equipping scholars with the necessary skills starts before they leave their home country—and in fact, before they are even selected—and positive linkages with Australia should continue after they return home. This includes examining the selection process, pre-departure training and initial welcomes to Australia, through to the alumni experience. Reform will be gradual, taking advantage of natural points in the program cycle.

DFAT Scholarships and Alumni Branch will monitor the success of the framework. This will primarily be through existing mechanisms, utilising the robust and comprehensive Australia Awards Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, with updates where necessary.

** For the purposes of this framework, the term ‘Australia Awards scholar’ also includes short course recipients.

Purpose

This framework outlines the Australian Government’s ambition to enhance the Australia Awards on-award engagement experience and ensure a more coordinated and coherent approach.

This includes improving access to opportunities for all Australia Awards scholars to establish personal and professional links with Australia. Linkage activities will:

- **connect** scholars with other Australia Awards scholars, other students (domestic, international, short course scholars), academics, peers in the public and private sector, and the Australian community
- **target** personal and professional links most likely to endure upon return home and assist scholars to contribute to development in their area of professional expertise
- **complement and link** with other people-to-people programs and strengthen Australia’s soft power influence
- **enhance** scholars’ knowledge and understanding of Australia and Australians, and vice-versa
- **contribute** to scholars’ positive experience and perception of Australia.

Learn | Link | Lead

Activities under this framework will align with the themes *Learn, Link, and Lead*.



Scholars acquire the knowledge and skills to drive change and contribute to development of their countries



Scholars create and nurture lasting connections between Australia and their countries, professions and the region



Scholars return home and become part of an influential global network of leaders and advocates making a difference in their respective fields and countries.

Outcomes

Tools, guidance, and activities under the framework will deliver:



ways to improve access to linkage activities for all Australia Awards scholars



clear and coordinated linkage communication channels with scholars and stakeholders



increased collaboration and sharing of information and opportunities between linkage partners



increased awareness of gender equality and support for women's leadership



strengthened public and private sector engagement

Australia Awards— Australia's flagship scholarship program

The Australian Government invests over \$300 million each year in the Australia Awards to support the education of emerging leaders from developing countries.

Australia Awards contribute to the long-term objectives of **promoting growth and stability in our region**, as well as **strengthening links** between people and organisations to enhance **mutual understanding and cooperation**.

DFAT's delivery partners all play a role in building and enhancing mutually beneficial connections and relationships between Australia Awards scholars and the Australian community.

We will work together to capitalise on the opportunity in hosting some of the best and brightest from the Indo-Pacific and beyond.



Delivery partners



DFAT provides:

- strategic direction in foreign policy
- diplomatic networks and convening power
- international development cooperation
 - to educate emerging leaders from developing countries, and build partnerships and links between government, academia and industry
- diplomatic leverage for Australian education as a soft power asset.

Engagement with emerging leaders for study and professional development in Australia begins at selection, and continues through to active participation in our prestigious Global Alumni network.



Australia Awards scholar journey



Tools for enhancing connections

New tools, approaches and activities are being explored and developed to harness existing opportunities, and help create new ones



Australia Awards Linkages Good Practice Guide

- assists all Australia Awards delivery partners to achieve the best possible on-award enrichment experience for scholars
- practical tips, ideas and case studies to shape and inform current and future planning and delivery
- use in conjunction with Australia Awards policies as the authoritative source of information on all policy requirements.



The Australia Awards Linkages Guide for Scholars

- provides guidance in sourcing activities designed for networking and making the most of their experience in Australia, including academic, extra-curricular and non-academic activities
- self-led enrichment approach to meet individual requirements and interests
- includes a Linkages Plan to capture connections and skills, a living document updated throughout the duration of the scholarship.



Training and development

- reinforce the importance of participating in on-award engagement to forge links with Australia
- soft skills training to maximise on-award engagement opportunities—networking, leadership and professional development
- outlined in the Good Practice Guide and incorporated into existing activities.



Communication and sharing opportunities

Exploring ways to:

- publicise on-award engagement activities for all Australia Awards scholars
- enable delivery partners to digitally showcase wide-ranging activities
- support scholars to build a portfolio of professional competencies and achievements, complementing academic credentials.



Australia Awards linkages forum

- enhance collaboration and strengthen consistency between delivery partners
- share best practice
- explore new ideas and innovations





A wealth of activities already exists for Australia Awards scholars to develop networking, leadership and professional skills, and to connect with the Australian community.

Activities by tiers of participation

Activities can be categorised into three tiers of participation, allowing scholars to engage at a level that suits their individual interests and availability



Core **foundation** activities encourage successful study habits and meaningful engagement with the Australian community paving the way for a positive stay in Australia.



Elective activities offer a wide range of additional professional skills development and networking for scholars to tailor their own linkages experience.



Targeted activities are offered to select scholars identified as highly motivated and influential. Activities support country/regional and thematic policy priorities.



DFAT-led targeted activities

Where appropriate, DFAT will continue to develop targeted activities to connect Australia Awards scholars with Australia.



The Australia Awards Women's Leadership Initiative

The Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI) (\$5.4 million, 2017–2022) supports participants—Australia Awards scholars from the Pacific studying at Australian institutions—to fulfil their leadership potential and drive big ideas and reforms in their communities. The program encourages Pacific women to take on leadership roles and helps to deepen people-to-people links with Australia.

The WLI has activities ranging from Pacific leadership seminars for all female and male scholars to intensive training and mentoring for a select group of women to develop their leadership capabilities.

'We mean business!'

Thank you WLI for believing in women in the Pacific. Women's leadership certainly plays a positive role in effecting positive and relevant development agendas in the Pacific and beyond.'

Eselealofa Apinelu, WLI participant and Attorney-General of Tuvalu



Promoting linkages for African Australia Awards scholars

Australia Awards in Africa held Stay Connected Workshops in six Australian capital cities in 2018, giving 64 Master's scholars practical soft skills training in public speaking, networking and representation. The Stay Connected workshops challenged the scholars to consider what kind of leader they wanted to be and who they are interested in meeting while in Australia in order to increase their networks.

'The [Australia Awards Stay Connected] workshop has enhanced my skills in the area of leadership, networking and pitching. I will actively participate in networking opportunities that come my way so that I can develop my confidence and leadership skills.'

Anne Chivunde, Malawi, Master of Science in Public Policy and Management, Carnegie Mellon University, South Australia

Strengthening links with South and West Asia

Australia Awards scholars from South and West Asia, selected through a competitive process, came to Canberra in October 2018 for a Scholars Forum supporting institutional and people-to-people links between Australia and the region. The inaugural Forum attracted over 100 participants, including 58 Australia Awards scholars, alumni, senior diplomats, university representatives and DFAT.

'Australia Awards is not only helping me enhance my knowledge in power engineering but has also given me the opportunity to build networks and linkages at both personal and professional levels.'

Wangmo from Bhutan, Master of Engineering Science, University of Southern Queensland.



**For more information
and key resources:**

<https://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia-awards/Pages/australia-awards-resources.aspx>

- [The Australia Awards Linkages Good Practice Guide](#)
- [The Australia Awards Linkages Guide for Scholars](#)
- [The Australia Awards website](#)