



Australia Awards

The Australia Awards Linkages Guide for Scholars

Enrichment support for delivery
partners and scholars





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Welcome!

Congratulations on being selected for an Australia Award! The Awards are prestigious and highly competitive, so being selected is an achievement.

Studying in Australia will open new doors for you. By representing your nation, your organisation and your community, you'll be able to encourage mutual understanding and broaden your perspective on life. Once your scholarship is completed, you can apply your new skills and knowledge to activities and projects that make a positive contribution to your country's development.

This Guide will help you to get the most out of your Australia Award experience. It covers everything from the importance of professional organisations to what to do about work experience. Read it carefully, and if you have any questions, talk to your Student Contact Officer.

The Australia Awards scholarship is funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and similar scholarships have been funded by the Australian government since the early 1950s.

These programs have provided opportunities for thousands of individuals to enhance their qualifications and go on to become leaders in government and private sector organisations in many countries. After almost 70 years, a key legacy for the Australia Awards is the positive person-to-person and bilateral institutional links resulting from each scholar's time in Australia.

Successfully completing your academic studies is your primary goal in Australia, but there are many ways you can contribute to this success by maximising your opportunities.





How to use this guide

Australia Awards recognises that it requires a team effort to maximise the experience for scholars.

The Australia Awards Linkages Good Practice Guide supports delivery partners and scholars and answers questions such as:

- What is meant by the Australia Awards Linkages and enrichment activities?
- How can I find Linkage opportunities at my academic institution?
- What Linkages opportunities are available outside my academic institution?
- What are foundational, elective and targeted Linkage activities?

This Guide offers more detailed support to scholars around the following:

- Why should I develop a personal Linkages plan?
- What role do on-line professional resources and special interest groups have in Linkages?
- How are professional associations in Australia relevant to me?
- How can I attend a conference?
- What is a think tank?
- How can I become involved in volunteering?
- What work experience opportunities will be available to me?
- What are the International Student of the Year awards?
- How can I access the Global Alumni network?

The final part of the Guide profiles Australia Awards scholars, who provide excellent examples of on-Award enrichment experiences in practice.

Developing a Linkages plan

Having a Linkages plan will help you get the most value from your time in Australia.

It doesn't need to be complicated—it just requires you to write down how you plan to take part in enrichment activities.

Here are some ideas for building your plan:

- Explore the on-Award enrichment opportunities at your academic institution and take advantage of at least one opportunity in your first few weeks.
- Ensure you have a well-written, current LinkedIn account so people with similar professional interests can contact you.
- Explore volunteering opportunities in your state or territory and volunteer for at least one event in your first semester.
- Explore options for professional association membership and attend at least one event to learn more about relevant professional associations.
- Plan to attend a conference—many of them offer subsidised places to full-time students.
- Attend a think tank seminar in your state or territory.
- Join a special interest group that's relevant to your study discipline.
- Look into International Student of the Year application processes in your state or territory.
- Connect with Australia Awards alumni through LinkedIn or face-to-face events.

More information is provided in the following pages.



Connect with Australia Awards alumni through LinkedIn or face-to-face events.



Making the most of online¹

LinkedIn

If you don't already have a LinkedIn account, it is worth investing time when you first arrive in Australia.

To set one up, visit
<https://www.linkedin.com/>

A LinkedIn account is your web-based CV. It's most effective when it reflects your current professional role in your home country as well as your new status as a full-time student in Australia on an Australia Awards scholarship.

It's important your account is up to date when you begin your scholarship so people with similar interests know you are now in Australia and you can connect with people who might want to offer employment opportunities.

Check how your LinkedIn profile compares with others:

1. Is it written in English?
2. Have you included current contact details and information?
3. Does it include a good quality photo?
4. Have you described your Australia Awards studies?

Meetup

Meetup is one of a range of web-based social organisations that connect people with similar interests.

The Australian Meetup website (<https://www.meetup.com/en-AU/>) includes information on cultural, social and professional interest groups across the country—there are Meetup groups in most places.

You should also try Googling for local clubs or groups for people with similar interests to yours—you may be surprised at what you find.

1. References to LinkedIn, Meetup and Google do not constitute an endorsement of these services by the Australian Government.

Professional associations



Professional associations are peak bodies or umbrella organisations for people working in similar professional fields.

They help members to maintain and enhance their professional knowledge by providing ongoing education, quality control and research.

They also seek to maintain professional standards by offering ongoing development to members, and they represent members' interests to the government and the community.

Becoming involved in a professional association means you can list your professional membership, development activities and significant contributions on your CV.

This shows a commitment to your profession that will set you apart if there are employment opportunities, especially if you have limited work experience.

The benefits of a professional association student membership include:

- Free or subsidised student membership
- Events, conferences and other opportunities for networking and professional development
- Access to research on areas of professional practice, quality and innovation
- Interest or focus groups specialising in specific areas of your industry
- Subscriptions to journals and other publications
- Access to current salary information based on the association's surveys
- Advice on workplace agreements
- Mentoring schemes, career advice, industry information and job vacancy listings
- Access to mini-scholarships, awards and prizes
- Information on professional registration requirements related to assessing overseas qualifications in Australia.

Business councils

If you work in the private sector in your home country, you may be interested in connecting with an international business council in Australia:

- Australia Indonesia Business Council (www.aibc.com.au)
- Australia Papua New Guinea Business Council (www.apngbc.org.au)
- Australia Philippines Business Council (www.apbc.org.au)
- Australia Vietnam Business Council (www.avbc.org.au)
- Australia ASEAN Business Council (www.australia-aseanbc.org)
- Sri Lanka-Australia-New Zealand Business Council (<https://slanzbc.com/>)
- Australia Africa Business Council (<http://aabcnsw.com.au/>)
- Australia Bangladesh Business Council (<http://www.abbc.org.au>)

To find similar groups, search the internet for 'Australia (insert country name) business council'.



Conferences



Attending conferences is an excellent way to network with leaders in your professional field, even if you're not presenting.

Conference registration fees can be expensive, but as a student you may receive a substantial discount on the normal registration cost. You should plan ahead to attend a conference.

For example, how will you get there, and how will you pay for the registration fee? Examine the conference content and speakers to see if they are relevant to your studies and professional interests, and decide whether the conference might expand your professional network.

Conal Conference Alerts² has a useful calendar of academic and professional conferences (<https://conferencealerts.com/country-listing?country=australia>).

If you are enrolled in a research degree (Masters or PhD), your university may contribute to the cost of conference attendance and/or travel costs, particularly if you are giving a paper or poster presentation. Check with your academic supervisor or campus administration team.

2. The reference to Conal Conference Alerts does not constitute an endorsement of this company by the Australian Government.

Think tanks

Think tanks conduct research and advocacy to engage and inform the public on a range of topics including social policy, political strategy, economics, defence, technology and culture.



Most think tanks are non-profit organisations. Some are funded by governments, advocacy groups or businesses, or obtain funding from consulting or research work related to their projects.

Taking part in think tank events such as public lectures or discussion forums is usually free or low-cost for full-time students.

Examples of think tanks, policy institutes and research institutes in Australia are:

- [The Australia Institute \(Canberra\)](#)
- [Centre for Independent Studies \(Sydney\)](#)
- [Leaders Institute \(Adelaide\)](#)
- [Centre for Policy Development \(Sydney and Melbourne\)](#)
- [Grattan Institute \(Melbourne\)](#)
- [Institute of Public Affairs \(Melbourne\)](#)
- [Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research](#)
- [Sydney Institute](#)
- [Asialink \(Melbourne\)](#)
- [Asia Education Foundation \(Melbourne\)](#)
- [Lowy Institute for International Policy \(Sydney\)](#)
- [Per Capita \(Melbourne\)](#).

Check these groups' websites to explore upcoming events in your city.



Volunteering

Many Australia Awards scholars have found satisfaction and enjoyment, and made valuable connections, by volunteering with charities in Australia.

Through volunteering, you can make an important contribution to your local community and meet new people who share your interests. You will also learn new skills and gain valuable experience.

Choosing the right volunteering opportunity may be daunting. Be clear about what you want out of the experience and the skills you offer. Think about how your particular skills and knowledge might be useful to an organisation with an active volunteer program.

Once you find an interesting opportunity, apply directly to the organisation to find out next steps.

These may include:

- Attending an interview
- Attending an information session
- Checking your references
- Applying for a Working with Children or Police Check.

If you don't receive a fast response to your application, don't be disheartened. Many not-for-profit organisations have small budgets and limited staff (who are often volunteers themselves), so you need to be patient.

Your academic institution is likely to have good contacts with local volunteering organisations. You can usually get this information from the careers advice unit.

Alternatively, look at databases for volunteering such as Go Volunteer.³

For an example of how a scholar benefited from volunteering work, read the profile for Irsa Camelia Rumkabu in the scholar profiles at the end of this Guide.

3. The reference to Go Volunteer does not constitute an endorsement of this company by the Australian Government.

Work experience opportunities

Some academic programs include workplace learning opportunities, but if your academic program doesn't, you may still be able to benefit from work experience during your studies.

In collaboration with academic institutions, state governments in most states have teamed up with Practera to help international students develop employability skills and expand their social connections.

They undertake consulting projects in multi-disciplinary teams as part of a work-integrated learning experience. There is a structured problem-solving process, supported by Practera's online learning platform and a team mentor.

The project ends with a team presentation to the project client and colleagues.

This is a great way to gain experience in research, collaborative problem-solving, client relations and presentation skills in a real-world Australian employment environment.

For information about work experience opportunities in your state, use these links:

Study Melbourne Live Projects:

<https://www.studymelbourne.vic.gov.au/live>

Global Scope NSW:

<https://intersective.com/globalscope/>

Adelaide Engage Work Experience Network:

<https://dti.sa.gov.au/international-education/projects#AEWEN>

Study Perth

<https://www.studyperth.com.au/launch/internships-work-experience>

Study Canberra

<https://www.studycbr.com.au>

Study Queensland

<https://www.studyqueensland.qld.gov.au/About-Us>



International Student of the Year awards

Most Australian states and territories have an annual International Student of the Year award and Australia Awards scholars often apply.

Apart from being a great honour and privilege, winning this award would boost your CV.

If you want to enter, research the awards in your state or territory early so you can plan your application. There will be key submission dates and judging criteria to address.

Being selected as an International Student of the Year is not just about achieving high academic grades.

The awards recognise extra-curricular contributions that add value to a community, and this is where the work you have done through your Linkages Plan and on-Award enrichment activities will count.



Australia Awards Alumni network



One of the most important sources of information about on-Award enrichment opportunities is from former scholars who have completed their studies in Australia and returned to their home country.

It's worth exploring these alumni groups on social media platforms.

Here are some tips:

- Before you apply to join a group, read the group protocols.
- Use the forum to tap into the skills and experience of alumni by, for example, thinking strategically about how you can generate interest in, and responses to, your posts.
- A good photo with a few words about who you are and why you have joined the group will make members more likely to want to interact with you.



Success stories



Success stories



Irsa Camelia Rumkabu

I have now completed my studies in Australia and wanted to write about the marvellous learning experience I've had volunteering for two years with the Girl Guides Association as Deputy Manager of the North West Melbourne Metropolitan Region.

Prior to my role with the Girl Guides Association I thought "I will volunteer my time, knowledge and skills for the community around me".

During my time as a volunteer though, I realised that I was receiving far more than giving. I felt that I was growing and learning both professionally and personally and having fun in the process. I improved my communication skills because occasionally (without any preparation) I was asked to give a speech at various Girl Guides ceremonies.

I also gained knowledge from working with a group of new people, creating and managing events to encourage girls to be independent, smart and confident and to develop their leadership potential. This experience has inspired me to create a similar program in my home town in Indonesia.

An additional benefit, when I think back on the stress of studies, was the positive effect meeting cheerful girls at Girl Guides units had on boosting my mood when I was exhausted from assignments and projects. I would definitely recommend volunteering to all commencing awardees for the enormous satisfaction that it brings.

Good Practice Example:

"Papua New Guinea and Australia's dynamic partnership and the enduring benefits of education are on show this week at a reintegration workshop for recent graduates of the prestigious Australia Awards Scholarships program.

The 52 graduates are taking part in the workshop in Port Moresby from 20–21 June to deepen links with other alumni and future employers and connect with the PNG Australia Alumni Association (PNGAAA), which will continue to support them into the future.

Participants completed studies in Australia late 2018 and early 2019 in priority sectors such as health, education and governance.

The workshop's key aims are to further develop ethical leadership capabilities and support the leadership role Australia Awards Alumni can play in Papua New Guinea's economic and social development.



'You are the change makers. You are the people with the knowledge and skills to bring positive change to the people of your great country, in all of the sectors you work in,' Minister-Counsellor Mr Egan said."

Press release by Australian High Commission, Port Moresby.

Success stories



Ahmed Hassan

I feel a great sense of accomplishment as I come to the end of my studies.

The experience of studying overseas as part of an Australia Awards Scholarship has been extremely rewarding, and I feel honoured to have been given the chance to study at an Australian university.

I have been able to meet a lot of international experts in my field of project management and grow my network of industry contacts.

One of my courses was guest-facilitated by a senior staff member from NASA, the US Space Agency, who had managed several very high-profile projects for NASA and is tasked with developing the agency's capabilities in program and project management and engineering.

The NASA official was new to the campus, and I was lucky enough to spend valuable time with him outside of lectures by showing him around the campus with a few of my colleagues.

I took this opportunity to speak with him about my background and gather ideas

about how project management principles might be applied to my development plans in the Maldives.

One of the most useful parts of my entire master's degree was to deliver a presentation to a panel of experts, consisting of CEOs, board members and representatives of several leading companies in the project management sector, including banks and infrastructure companies.

After the presentation, I was able to spend some time with the panel talking about my aspirations, and add another group of practitioners to my network.

I plan to keep my new networks active after I return to the Maldives. I make sure I get business cards and contact details from everyone I meet, and I follow up by either connecting with them on LinkedIn or sending them an email to thank them for their time.

I have also enjoyed the Australian outdoors and cultural experiences. I've visited beaches and taken hikes, attended major music events and followed the cricket. A favourite experience was visiting the Lark Quarry Dinosaur Trackway in outback Queensland, considered to be the site of the world's only known record of a dinosaur stampede.

Dr Halil Chalid

Dr Halil Chalid completed a PhD at Monash University in 2015 which focused on the development of soft skills among Australia Awards scholars and the applicability to the workplace on their return to the home country.

He speaks of the scholarship program as being a whole experience, encompassing both the academic and the non-academic components.

'When we apply for the scholarship program, we think about getting a degree. But when we undertake the scholarship in Australia, the non-academic experience comes into play, because this is where we lead our lives, interact, adapt to new surroundings, sometimes out of our comfort zone. This brings out the best in scholars, what I call soft skills and intercultural competency.

For more information:

- [Australia Awards Linkages Framework Overview](#)
- [The Australia Awards Linkages Good Practice Guide](#)
- [The Australia Awards website](#)