



New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2024 Round Guidelines

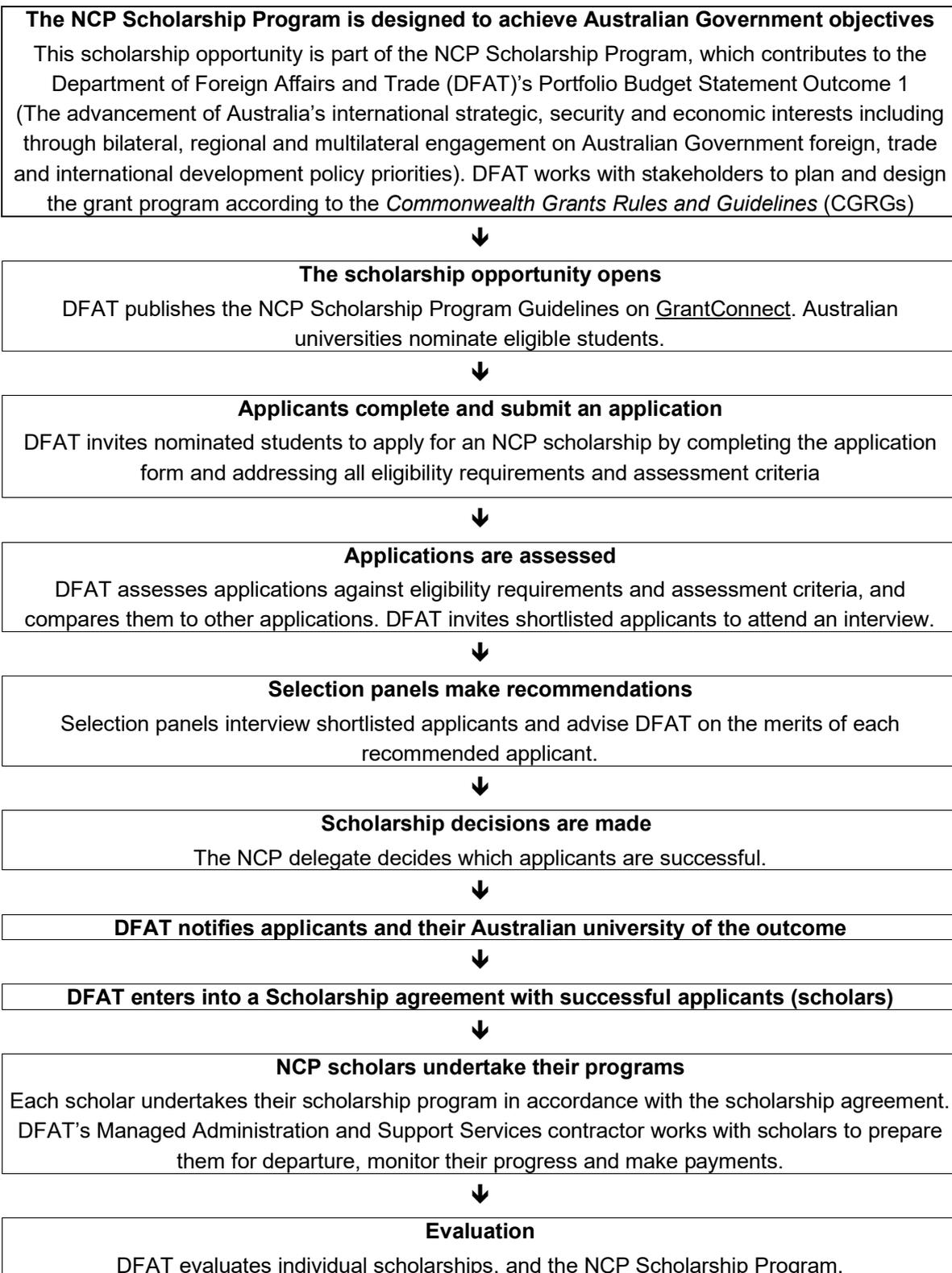
University nominations open:	29 June 2023
University nominations close:	11.30 pm AEST on 25 July 2023
Student applications open:	26 July 2023
Student applications close:	11.30 pm AEST on 22 August 2023
Commonwealth policy and administering entity:	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Enquiries:	Please 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 Mobility Program 2024 Round Guidelines

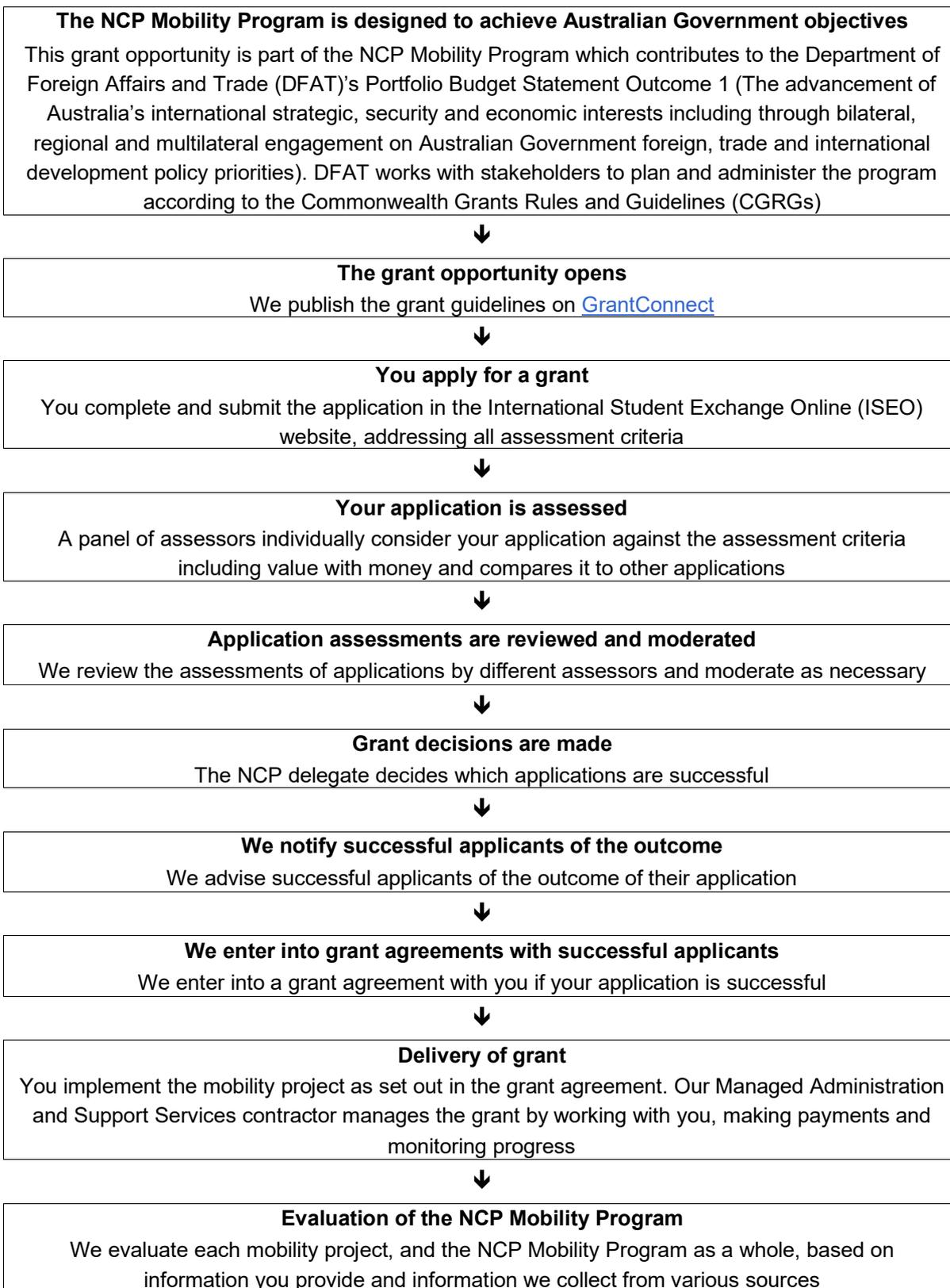
Applications open:	30 June 2023
Applications closing date and time:	11.30 pm AEST on 31 August 2023
Commonwealth policy and administering entity:	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Enquiries:	Please send any questions to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au , no later than 24 August 2023
Date guidelines released:	29 June 2023
Type of grant opportunity:	Open competitive

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1. New Colombo Plan Mobility Program 2024 Round processes



1.1 Introduction

These guidelines relate to the 2024 round of the New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program. You must read these guidelines in full and the 2024 Advice to Applicants on the DFAT [website](#) before

applying. These guidelines take priority to the extent of any inconsistency with the Advice to Applicants.

These guidelines set out:

- the purpose of the NCP Mobility Program and this grant opportunity
- eligibility requirements and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are assessed and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grants
- how grants are monitored and evaluated, and
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

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 (for 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.

We administer the program according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines* (CGRGs)¹

2.2 About the NCP Mobility Program

The NCP Mobility Program provides funding to Australian universities to deliver mobility projects that enable Australian university students to participate in study, internships, mentorships, practicums and research in eligible Indo-Pacific host locations.

The NCP Mobility Program encourages universities to develop innovative partnerships with organisations and communities in Australia and the region to enhance NCP student experiences. For example, a private sector organisation may offer additional internship opportunities or other support to NCP students.

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

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 provider (the contractor) to support the management of application and selection processes of the NCP Mobility Program. All persons involved in selection processes 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 on administrative matters, including eligibility for the NCP Mobility Program, applications and funding arrangements, variations to approved projects, risk management, completion of reporting and acquittals, and monitoring and evaluation.

DFAT is not responsible for arranging study, internships, mentorships, language training, travel (including visas and accommodation) or other aspects of mobility projects, including managing risk and critical incidents. Home universities, host institutions, host organisations and language training providers are responsible for planning, implementation and managing mobility projects.

2.4 Roles and responsibilities of Australian universities

Australian universities can apply for funding under the NCP Mobility Program to deliver a mobility project. Australian universities are responsible for managing their NCP projects, including the welfare and safety of participating students. Australian universities are responsible for:

- a) ensuring the mobility project complies with the home university's quality assurance processes
- b) being aware of relevant travel advice on the Australian Government's [Smartraveller](#) website and carefully considering the risk of travel to proposed host locations and regions within host locations before applying
- c) actively promoting the NCP and complying with [NCP Media and Publication Guidelines](#)
- d) ensuring students are eligible to participate and the process used to select students is fair, independent and transparent, and providing details of this process to DFAT on request
- e) actively supporting participation of a diverse range of students
- f) informing students of other funding available to help with the cost of undertaking mobility projects, for example OS-HELP²
- g) ensuring staff and students participating in the mobility project subscribe to relevant travel advisories on Smartraveller prior to travelling overseas. If Smartraveller activates a crisis page for an overseas incident, students in those location(s) must register on that page
- h) ensuring staff and students participating in the mobility project do not travel to or remain in locations where Smartraveller advice is "Do not travel" or "Reconsider your need to travel"
- i) ensuring appropriate risk management and safety precautions are in place, uploading critical incident plans and risk management plans to ISEO at least four weeks prior to the commencement of overseas travel. Critical incident plans must include procedures for managing and reporting critical incidents and emergency contact details (the NCP Student Welfare Risk Management Better Practice Guide refers)
- j) requiring students to obtain travel medical advice, including any necessary vaccinations prior to commencing travel, and the management of pre-existing conditions

² OS-HELP is a loan available to eligible students enrolled in an Australian Government-supported place who want to undertake some of their study overseas. Information on OS-HELP is available from <https://www.studyassist.gov.au/help-loans>

- k) ensuring travel insurance has been provided, or support students to seek, and ensure they have obtained, their own insurance, and
- l) ensuring adequate support is in place at the host institution and/or host organisation and home university
- m) ensuring staff and participating students are aware of and comply with [DFAT's Child Protection Policy](#) and [Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#) including the reporting obligations under these policies (see Section 10.3)
- n) taking into account the [Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector](#)
- o) complying with all applicable requirements under the Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020 (Cth). 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 Mobility Program. Information about the Foreign Arrangements Scheme is available at <https://www.foreignarrangements.gov.au/>
- p) not providing support or resources to organisations or individuals associated with terrorism, including 'terrorist organisation' as defined in Division 102 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
- q) arranging appropriate pre-departure briefing for participating students, including ensuring all students complete DFAT's online NCP pre-departure training modules (i.e. the Risks and Responsibilities and Cultural Awareness modules).
- r) ensuring students travel using only an Australian passport, obtain appropriate visas for host locations and comply with the terms of those visas
- s) ensuring students are advised that the Australian Government may collect, use, disclose and publish a student's personal information (see Sections 12.4, 13.3 and 13.4)
- t) ensuring all student details are entered into ISEO at least three weeks before a student departs Australia
- u) ensuring all students receive the NCP Mobility Program information letter, NCP Student Code of Conduct, and NCP Media and Publication Guidelines prior to departure
- v) ensuring students sign an acknowledgement that they have read the NCP Student Code of Conduct prior to departure
- w) issuing NCP Completion Certificates and Welcome to the NCP Alumni Program letters from ISEO to students who have completed a mobility project
- x) providing supplementary information about the mobility project, if requested by DFAT or the contractor, to assist NCP Mobility Program promotion, monitoring and evaluation
- y) submitting a completion report within four weeks of participating students' return to Australia, including providing additional information, if requested, to enable acceptance of the report, and
- z) providing services to encourage, enable and support the participation of a diverse range of students in NCP projects 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, students who are first in their immediate family to attend university, students across genders, female students studying in non-traditional fields, students living with disability, and students from a non-English speaking background.

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants 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.

DFAT may offer less funding for a successful project than the amount sought by a university in an application depending on, for example, available funding and the university's implementation of funding from previous NCP rounds.

An NCP Mobility grant provides funds for

- a) student grants to contribute to students' international travel and living costs to participate in the mobility project, and
- b) administration funding (see Section 5.2.2).

3.2 Grant period

The minimum duration of a mobility project is 14 continuous days (from the date of departure to the host location to the date of return to Australia from that host location).

The maximum program duration is two consecutive semesters.

Participating students must commence travel during the mobility program term (1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025).

4. Eligibility criteria

DFAT will only consider applications that satisfy all eligibility requirements.

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

Only Australian universities are eligible to apply for funding through the NCP Mobility Program.

Australian universities may submit consortium applications (see Section 7.2). You must not apply for funding for the same project in the same round through both an individual and a consortium application.

4.2 Student eligibility

You must ensure each student receiving a student grant:

- a) is an Australian citizen
- b) is not a citizen or permanent resident of the proposed host location/s
- c) is enrolled in an Australian onshore campus and undertaking an undergraduate course
- d) will receive credit for completion of the mobility project or have it count towards the requirements for the student's course (as in Section 5.1b) at an Australian university
- e) meets the age requirements set out in Section 4.3
- f) not be an employee of the branch of DFAT that administers the NCP, or the contractor
- g) does not
 - (i) receive more than one NCP student grant for the same mobility project, or
 - (ii) receive more than two NCP student grants during the course of their undergraduate study
 - (iii) participate in another offshore scholarship or mobility project while participating in an NCP mobility project unless otherwise approved by DFAT.
- h) agrees to comply with DFAT's [Child Protection Policy](#) and [Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#) including the reporting obligations under these policies (see Section 10.3), and has completed DFAT's online NCP pre-departure training modules,
- i) has signed an acknowledgement that they have read NCP Student Code of Conduct prior to their departure, and
- j) takes into account the [Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector](#)

4.3 Age requirements

You must ensure at least 70 per cent of students participating in a mobility project and receiving a student grant are aged between 18 and 28 years inclusive at the commencement of the mobility project.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students do not need to be aged between 18 and 28, and for the purposes of calculating the 70 per cent of students, are to be counted as students aged under age 28, recognising that a high proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students are mature aged students.

If you cannot fill places on a mobility project due to these age requirements, you may apply to DFAT for an exemption to these age requirements prior to the project commencing. We will consider:

- the demonstrated inability to recruit students within the relevant age requirements
- the steps you have taken to meet this requirement, and
- whether the home university has a high proportion of mature age students.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible grant activities

NCP Mobility Program funding may only be used for student grants and administration costs for an approved mobility project, as outlined in this Section.

Australian universities can apply for funding for mobility projects that meet the following criteria:

- a) include at least one of the following components:
 - (i) study
 - (ii) in-country face-to-face language study
 - (iii) internships (including clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies), or
 - (iv) research
- b) provide credit or otherwise count towards the course requirements for the student's undergraduate course (see Glossary for definition of 'undergraduate course')
- c) be undertaken in an eligible host location (see Section 5.5.1)
- d) must not be undertaken at an off-shore campus of an Australian university or of a country other than the host location, or at a university established or headquartered outside the host location, unless approved by DFAT under section 5.8, and
- e) must not breach DFAT's Safeguard Principles, as set out in section 5.9.

If a mobility project includes activities focused on scientific exchange or research, the home and host institutions/organisations should become familiar with Australia's export control regimes.

Similarly, the [Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector](#) are foundational elements essential for building resilience within a university in response to foreign interference and should be applied proportionate to the risk at each institution.

5.2 Eligible expenditure

5.2.1 Student grants

Eligible students participating in a mobility project will each receive a student grant as determined by you. The student grant is intended to contribute, in the first instance, to the cost of a student's international travel and in-country living expenses during the project. Off-shore language training may also be included. Preference will be given to semester-length projects, to create a stream of students with long-term immersive experiences in the Indo-Pacific.

In the Project Description of your application, you must provide a value-for-money justification for the proposed per-student funding.

The amount of a student grant should reflect actual costs at individual locations (for example, cost of living differences between host locations). We suggest the following as indicative student grant amounts:

- up to \$3,000 for participation in a mobility project of at least 2 weeks
- up to \$4,000 for participation in a mobility project of at least 4 weeks
- up to \$5,000 for participation in a mobility project of at least 6 weeks
- up to \$10,000 for participation in a mobility project of at least one semester
- up to \$20,000 for participation in a mobility project of two consecutive semesters

The actual amount of a student grant may vary depending on the relative costs of the host location, the nature of the mobility project and other considerations (for example additional travel expenses incurred by regional and remote students and/or increasing accessibility for students with disabilities).

Students participating in a mobility project for the same duration, at the same host location, undertaking the same activities at the same time should receive student grants of equal amounts for this activity. If a mobility project includes different options for overseas experiences, such as two-week and six-week options, you may provide student grants at different amounts.

The home university may provide a higher student grant to a student who incurs additional travel costs (for example, travel from a rural/remote location to join the departure point for international travel).

You may use funding for student grants to make group travel arrangements (and not pay all funding directly to students), where there is a benefit for the students (such as discounts through group bookings). In such cases, students must provide written consent to part of their mobility grant not being paid directly to them. You must retain evidence of this.

For grants of \$5,000 or more, the student may receive the grant in tranches, as determined by you.

You must not use funding provided for student grants for administration costs.

5.2.2 Administration funding

All recipients of NCP mobility funding will receive administration funding (ten per cent of total student grants for the project). Administration funding can be used for administration associated with NCP mobility project management, including but not limited to:

- a) additional support to increase diverse participation
- b) initiatives to raise the quality of mobility experiences (including risk management and critical incident planning for the mobility project)
- c) partnering with relevant Australian community groups to support quality project outcomes
- d) planning, arranging, and negotiating the mobility project
- e) supervising, monitoring and evaluating students' progress during the mobility project
- f) purchasing the services of third-party providers with relevant expertise and appropriate systems to support students to undertake the mobility project.

Universities must return unspent administration funding to DFAT (together with unspent mobility grant funding) once an NCP mobility project is completed and financially acquitted.

If a mobility project has been completed/expired without any student grants being expended, you must return all administration funding to DFAT. If not all students travelled as part of a project, you may retain administration funding equivalent to ten per cent of grants paid to students who did

travel. Where extenuating circumstances prevented students travelling, DFAT will consider requests to retain additional administration funding, up to ten per cent of grant funding offered.

5.3 What the 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, and
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility.

5.4 Mobility partnerships

We encourage you to develop mobility partnerships with organisations in Australia and the region to maximise opportunities for NCP-funded students and participating institutions to build linkages and develop lasting relationships that support the aims of the NCP. For example:

- financial sponsorship (a cash contribution) from a private sector organisation
- language training provided by community language schools in Australia prior to and/or after travel
- in-kind sponsorship through the provision of goods or services free of charge for use in the mobility project (that otherwise would have incurred a fee). This may include private sector organisations providing students access to resources or learning and development opportunities.

Mobility partnerships should contribute to achieving the NCP's strategic objective. They may not include contributions provided by Australian universities, host institutions, or service providers (paid a fee for supporting elements of a mobility project).

5.5 Eligible host locations

5.5.1 Host locations

Mobility projects 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 locations

A primary host location is the host location for which the mobility project is awarded. Most of the duration of a mobility project must be completed in the primary host location.

5.5.3 Secondary host locations

Components of a project may be undertaken in a secondary host location. For example:

- a) a research project in a primary host location and fieldwork in a secondary host location, or
- b) a study program in a primary host location with an internship in a secondary host location.

The rationale for including a secondary host location must be explained in the application.

5.6 Travel requirements

You (and participating students) are responsible for travel arrangements, including:

- a) accessing information about and addressing the risks of traveling (for example, obtaining comprehensive insurance that covers the host locations students will visit, their activities and pre-existing medical conditions)
- b) ensuring visa requirements are met
- c) reading and subscribing to relevant advice on [Smartraveller](#) and
- d) obtaining travel medical advice prior to commencing travel, including necessary vaccinations and advice on pre-existing medical conditions.

Participating students must not travel to or remain 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'.

5.7 Travel risks

In designing your mobility project application, you must carefully consider the risks of travel to all proposed host locations and regions. You must ensure strategies and services are in place to support student welfare and safety (see Section 2.4). You should advise participating students to make their own enquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel, including to the host location, and to ensure they are fully informed about the risks at all times.

Home universities are responsible for student welfare and safety. Home universities must be aware of and comply with their obligations under any applicable workplace health and safety legislation. Similarly, organisations who provide NCP internships will likely incur work health and safety duty of care responsibilities. You must ensure that student travel risk assessment and risk management plans address all risks identified in the host location advisory published on Smartraveller.

5.8 Host institutions

Mobility projects must not be undertaken at an off-shore campus of an Australian university or a university established or headquartered outside the host location (for example, an off-shore campus of a third country university). DFAT may waive this requirement in exceptional circumstances where there is a strong demonstrated benefit to the overall NCP mobility program.

5.9 Safeguard Principles

Mobility projects must comply with DFAT's Safeguard Principles as outlined in DFAT's Environmental and Social [Safeguard Policy](#).

Mobility projects must not cause harm including injury or injustice to any person that a mobility project is intended to engage with or assist, or to their wider communities or environment.

6. Assessment criteria

In the Project Description of the application, the applicant should outline:

- the activities participating students will undertake
- how the project will be delivered (including any use of a third-party provider)
- justification for the proposed cost per student (value with money)
- whether/how the project addresses a priority theme (as outlined in the Advice to Applicants).

Applications must address each criterion to a satisfactory standard.

Criterion 1: Ensuring a high-quality education experience

Weighting: 30%

Describe the educational value of the mobility project, including learning outcomes relevant to the courses participating students are undertaking at their home university. What competencies will students develop through this mobility experience? Who will assess students' academic progress?

Please outline how:

- the academic quality standards of the home university will be applied to the mobility project
- participation will contribute to core learning outcomes of participating students
- increased understanding of host location language (where applicable) and culture will be supported
- the home university will assess the academic performance of participating students.

Criterion 2: Deepening people-to-people and institutional linkages with the Indo-Pacific

Weighting: 40%

Describe how the proposed mobility project will:

- (a) establish new and/or deepen people-to-people and institutional partnerships in the Indo-Pacific, and**
- (b) build and sustain these linkages over time.**

Please outline how the project will meet the NCP's strategic objectives by deepening and sustaining linkages in the region. You should provide practical examples of how the project will enable students, universities, the private sector, community groups, and other stakeholders to develop and sustain partnerships (for example through research collaborations, longer periods in the host location, a focus on language study, and/or advancing a thematic priority outlined in the Advice to Applicants).

Please outline how institutional and people-to-people linkages will continue and be sustained into the future (after any NCP funding ceases), including detailing any current or planned partnership agreements (such as MoUs).

Criterion 3: Broadening participation and promoting the New Colombo Plan

Describe how the mobility project will support increased participation by a diverse range of Australian students and promote the NCP in Australia and overseas

Weighting: 20%

Please describe practical steps/initiatives to encourage and support the participation of a diverse range of students in the mobility project.

While your response may reference policies of your institution, it should also provide specific examples of how the project would support participation of students who may not otherwise participate in international mobility experiences.

Criterion 4: Ensuring sound student welfare management in mobility projects

Weighting: 10%

Describe how your institution will ensure the safety and welfare of participating students, and manage risks during any disruptive events during the project

Please describe the offshore support available to participating students. Please outline risk management and safety planning and precautions, including the home university's policies and processes for monitoring and compliance with safeguards principles (including child protection, prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, and environmental and social safeguards) and managing critical incidents.

If third-party providers are to be used, how will the home university ensure that NCP policies relating to risk are adhered to?

7. How to apply

You must apply for funding and accept or decline funding through ISEO. You can nominate multiple staff to access ISEO but only the nominated International Liaison Officer (ILO) can submit an application in ISEO.

Any alterations or addenda to these guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.³ If you register on GrantConnect, you will be notified automatically of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for grants information.

7.1 Application process

You must enter the following details for each mobility project into the application form in ISEO:

- a) host location and primary city, field of study, whether the mobility project is a new or existing project (and the existing project number if applicable), the length of study and whether the application is a consortium application
- b) title and description of the project (including whether the project involves travel to a secondary location), mobility project type, qualification level, indicative travel dates, project partner(s) and mobility partnerships details
- c) confirmation that the project meets the eligibility criteria
- d) a contact point for the mobility project (usually the academic or mobility officer leading the mobility project)

³ 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

- e) responses to the assessment criteria
- f) total funding sought for student grants
- g) the number of students to participate in the mobility project
- h) declarations that:
 - the person submitting the application has the authority to do so
 - the application complies with the home university's quality assurance processes
 - all funded mobility projects will be implemented and funding will be expended and reported in accordance with these guidelines and the grant agreement
 - financial support received from the Australian Government will be acknowledged in all publications, promotional materials and activities
 - you have appropriate strategies and services in place to support student welfare and safety (see Section 2.4)
 - you can demonstrate an approach to increasing participation by 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, students who are first in their immediate family to attend university, students across genders, female students studying in non-traditional fields, students with a disability, and students from a non-English speaking background
 - if any personal details of a student or other third party are included in an application or otherwise provided to the Australian Government as part of the mobility project, the student or other third party has given written consent for the collection, use and disclosure of those details for this purpose, and
 - you acknowledge that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth).

You are responsible for ensuring the application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information to the Commonwealth is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code 1995* (Cth). An application may be excluded from consideration, offers revoked or a mobility project 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 mobility project are set out in the Grant Agreement.

If you find an error in the application after submitting it, email DFAT immediately at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au. DFAT does not have to accept additional information.

If DFAT finds an error or that information is missing, it may seek additional information from you that will not change the nature of the application. DFAT will not accept additional information after the closing time.

ISEO will automatically generate an email to acknowledge receipt of an application. You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

7.2 Joint (consortia) applications

Universities may submit applications on behalf of a consortium of universities. Each consortium application must nominate an Australian university as the lead applicant. The lead applicant will be required to enter into a grant agreement and will be accountable for meeting legal and reporting requirements on behalf of the consortium. The lead applicant must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties prior to execution of the grant agreement.

7.3 Timing of grant opportunity processes

Applications must be submitted between the opening and closing dates. Key dates in the selection and implementation of projects are outlined below. DFAT may amend these dates at any time by posting a notice on GrantConnect.

Opening date:	30 June 2023
Closing date:	31 August 2023 (11.30pm AEST)
Assessment and selection of applications:	September – October 2023
Funding offers to successful applicants will be made prior to the beginning of the project term	
Mobility project term:	1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025
Completion date for mobility projects:	31 December 2025

7.4 Questions during the application process

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

The NCP Secretariat will not respond to questions received after **5.00 pm (AEST)** 24 August 2023.

8. The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of grant applications

DFAT will not accept late applications. DFAT (and/or the contractor) will review each application for compliance with eligibility requirements (Section 4 and 5.1).

Your application will be assessed on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the assessment criteria (Section 6),
- how it compares to other applications, and
- whether it provides value with relevant money.

8.2 Who will assess applications?

Each eligible application will be reviewed by at least two 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.

The NCP Secretariat will moderate assessors' recommendations for consistency across panels and with the NCP strategic objective, taking into consideration:

- the range and diversity amongst host locations, fields of study, home universities and mobility partners
- the number of students expected to participate and the duration of the project
- Australian foreign policy considerations
- the applicant's track records in expending and reporting on previous NCP mobility projects.

The NCP Secretariat will present these recommendations to the program delegate (Section 8.3).

The selection process may be used to determine a merit list of suitable projects, which may be drawn from for future funding.

DFAT reserves the right to offer partial funding of a grant application.

8.3 Who will approve grants?

The program delegate (DFAT's First Assistant Secretary responsible for the NCP), or their delegate, will decide which applications will be funded, taking into account recommendations of assessors and the NCP Secretariat, Australian foreign policy considerations and the availability of funds.

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

- approval of the grant
- funding to be awarded, and
- terms and conditions of the grant

9. Notification of application outcomes

We will advise successful applicants via email, including any conditions attached to the project(s).

An offer, once made, is final. DFAT will not enter into negotiations about a funding offer.

9.1 Feedback on your application

Individual feedback will not be provided to applicants. If your application is unsuccessful, you may submit a new application for the same (or similar) project in any subsequent NCP rounds. A subsequent application will be assessed on its merits, based on the guidelines for that round.

10. Successful grant applications

10.1 Accepting an offer

Your ILO must accept or decline the offer for funding through ISEO by the date specified in the offer. Following acceptance of the funding offer, and prior to commencing the mobility project, DFAT will enter into a grant agreement with you, in accordance with Section 10.2.

10.2 The grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth of Australia, represented by DFAT. The grant agreement will cover all NCP grants awarded to you. The grant agreement has terms and conditions that cannot be changed and requires you to comply with these guidelines. The version of the guidelines in place when you submitted the application will apply to the mobility project. In the event of any inconsistency between the grant agreement and these guidelines, the grant agreement will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

You are responsible for any expenditure you make before a grant agreement is executed. If you start a mobility project before you have an executed grant agreement, you do so at your own risk.

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

10.3 Specific legislation and policies

You and NCP-supported students are required to comply with all relevant Australian and local laws and regulations, in Australia and in host locations when undertaking a mobility project. This includes compliance with laws in relation to child protection and preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

DFAT does not tolerate exploitation, abuse or harassment. This applies within DFAT and extends to those we work with. Universities and NCP participants must read and 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 students also have an obligation to comply with their university's policies on child protection and PSEAH.

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

10.4 How DFAT pays the grant

The contractor will pay the grant in accordance with the grant agreement.

10.5 Grant payments and GST

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). Neither DFAT nor its contractor provide taxation advice. Before any payments can be made you must submit to DFAT a valid tax invoice for the amount of the grant funding. The contractor may elect to issue a [Recipient Created Tax Invoice](#).

11. Announcement of grants

DFAT may publicly announce the approved NCP mobility projects including, but not limited to:

- the title of the mobility project, their Australian university and host institution(s)
- the description of study areas and internships/mentorships (and their timing), and
- the amount of funding awarded.

12. How we monitor your grant activity

12.1 Keeping us informed

You should advise us of any adverse circumstances affecting the implementation of the project.

12.2 Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. A completion report (following the template in ISEO) for each mobility project, must be submitted no later than four weeks after the return of the last student, and must include:

- a statement declaring that all funding has been spent in accordance with the grant agreement and, if applicable, any unspent amounts that will be returned to DFAT
- the number of students who participated in the project and the amount of funding paid to each student as a student grant
- the actual amount of administration funding used, including details of expenditure
- key achievements against the NCP strategic objective and outcomes, including linkages established
- student diversity groups, and
- a list of publicity materials used to promote the mobility project and the NCP and any media coverage.

You may also provide:

- feedback received about the mobility project, including from participants
- photographs and examples of promotional material (as attachments).

12.3 Variations to mobility projects

After an offer is accepted, requests to vary a mobility project will be considered only in accordance with this Section. Before applying to vary a mobility project, you should consider information in the *NCP Mobility Program Variations Guide* available on ISEO.

DFAT will not approve variation requests it considers to constitute a new project proposal.

A request to vary a mobility project will only be considered if the variation is:

- consistent with the strategic objective and outcomes of the NCP and these guidelines
- as close as is reasonable to the original mobility project as in the application, and
- consistent with the requirements regarding use of Australian Government funding including the CGRGs, the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (Cth) ('PGPA Act') and any other relevant governing policies for the disbursement of Australian Government grants funding.

You will be liable for any financial commitments you make in relation to proposed changes to a project prior to receipt of formal advice of approval of a variation.

If you cannot proceed with a mobility project in accordance with the application, and no variation is agreed, DFAT may withdraw a funding offer and/or request that funding be returned.

12.4 Sharing NCP stories

You should retain photographs, online articles and/or links and other media coverage documenting the project, to be provided on request to the NCP Secretariat. You may send material to the NCP Secretariat (ncp.communications@dfat.gov.au) at any time.

Before providing images or personal information to the Australian Government, you must advise students that the Australian Government may collect, use, disclose and publish a student's personal Information including in accordance with Sections 13.4.

12.5 Compliance visits

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

12.6 Evaluation

We evaluate how well the NCP Mobility Program is achieving its objective and outcomes. We may use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may also request information on the achievements of the project to inform evaluation of how effectively it contributed to the objective and outcomes of the NCP. Information may be used to create testimonials to promote the NCP.

Program stakeholders, including project partners and students, may be asked to participate in the evaluation of the NCP Mobility Program.

13. Probity

The Australian Government will ensure 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.

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> before establishing project partners.

DFAT may change these guidelines from time to time. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on GrantConnect. DFAT will advise home universities of any supplementary requirements relating to the implementation of approved NCP projects.

13.1 Enquiries and feedback

Please send any questions or complaints about grant decisions for this grant opportunity to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

If you do not agree with the way the DFAT has handled your complaint, you may 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 the DFAT.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (toll free): 1300 362 072
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

13.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if DFAT/the contractor's staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel has:

- a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer, employee of the contractor or member of an external assessment panel
- a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict you from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently, or
- a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform DFAT in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff are 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 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 (APPs) which prescribe rules for handling personal information.

DFAT and its contractors collect personal information in relation to mobility projects under the NCP Mobility Program. Types of personal information collected includes personal details (e.g. name, gender, date of birth and contact details) and diversity information.

The purpose of DFAT and its contractors collecting this information is for the management, administration, promotion and evaluation of the NCP Mobility Program including to:

- a) assess applications
- b) administer the NCP, including monitoring performance and following up with students 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 NCP students and alumni to relevant functions and events held in Australia and overseas.

DFAT may disclose personal information in relation to mobility projects under the NCP Mobility Program for the purposes listed above, including 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, the Department of Education and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- e) Australian Universities, including to the NCP Liaison Officers
- f) potential internship/mentorship host organisations and 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) media representatives, including foreign media representatives.

DFAT may also disclose personal information in relation to projects under the NCP Mobility Program to overseas recipients, including host institutions, potential internship/mentorship host organisations, language training providers, host location governments/authorities and non-government organisations. Applicants must ensure that individuals are aware and provide consent for their personal information to be disclosed to an overseas recipient. This includes ensuring students are aware that: (a) the overseas recipient will not be accountable under the Privacy Act; and (b) Students will not be able to seek redress under the Privacy Act, if the overseas recipient handles students' personal information in breach of the Privacy Act.

Without limitation, applicants must ensure appropriate consents are obtained from individuals, including in accordance with the scope of permitted use and disclosure under this Section.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the APPs and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything, which if done by DFAT would breach an APP as defined in the Act.

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, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or 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, or your employees, agents or subcontractors 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 grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets one of the conditions below:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. 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:

- the NCP Secretariat and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- DFAT's employees and contractors so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in 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 grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant 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](#) (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 FOI requests must be referred to DFAT's FOI 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

Term	Definition
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
Accountable authority	see subsection 12(2) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013
Administering entity	the entity that is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes
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 <i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</i> (Cth) that is registered in an “Australian University” category
Closing date/time	the date and time beyond which applications will not be accepted, as specified in the Section 7.3
Commonwealth entity	as defined in subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act
Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)	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.
Confidential information	information that satisfies criteria at Section 13.4, or that the Australian Government designates as confidential, or that either party knows or ought to know is confidential. Does not include information otherwise in the public domain.

Term	Definition
Conflict of interest	real, apparent or potential private or personal associations or interests (financial or non-financial) which improperly influence, or may improperly influence, an applicant's performance of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the NCP Mobility program.
Consortium	a group of Australian universities that has appointed a lead applicant to submit an application
Contractor (the contractor)	DFAT's Managed Administration and Support Services contractor for the NCP
Decision maker	the person who decides to award a grant
Disability	any limitation, restriction or impairment that restricts everyday activities or assistance is required and has lasted or is likely to last for at least six months.
Eligibility requirements	requirements which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria apply in addition to eligibility requirements.
Foreign Arrangements Scheme	the Foreign Arrangements Scheme is administered by DFAT to implement <i>Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020</i>
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. under which relevant money⁴ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money⁵ 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 activity/activities	the mobility project that the grantee is required to undertake
Grant agreement	sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant

⁴ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

⁵ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Term	Definition
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
Grant opportunity	the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted and will reflect the relevant grant selection process
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 single DFAT Portfolio Budget Statement Program
Grantee	the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant
Home university	the Australian university at which the relevant student is enrolled throughout the duration of the mobility project in which they are participating
Host institution	a university or other education provider where students are enrolled for study in the host location as part of an NCP mobility project
Host location	the geographic location in the Indo-Pacific, as listed in Section 5.5.1, in which students undertake mobility projects
Host organisation	any other organisation, besides the host institution that may host students for work, training, study or research in the host location as part of the mobility project
Internship	a work experience in which a student has learning goals relevant to their academic course and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies
ISEO or International Student Exchange Online	DFAT's online system for managing applications
Law	any applicable statute, regulation, by-law, ordinance or subordinate legislation in force from time to time in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Australia, whether made by a State, Territory, the Commonwealth, or a local government; and (b) the country in which the mobility project is being undertaken
Lead applicant	the Australian university submitting an application and meeting reporting requirements on behalf of a consortium

Term	Definition
Low Socio-Economic Status (SES)	students who are from a low SES 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
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
Mobility Private Sector Partnership	a financial or in-kind arrangement between one or more home universities or consortium and at least one Private Sector Organisation that meets the requirements in Section 5.4
Mobility Program Term	1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025
Mobility Project	a project that meets the eligibility requirements at Section 5.1 for which you seek funding in accordance with these guidelines
New Colombo Plan (NCP)	the NCP Scholarship Program, NCP Mobility Program and NCP Alumni Program
New Colombo Plan website	www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan
Off-shore campus	of an Australian university refers to a branch campus in a location outside 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
Personal information	the meaning defined in the <i>Privacy Act</i> : "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 <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth)
Private sector organisation	Australian, global and local commercial enterprises 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

Term	Definition
Project partner	the host institution(s), host organisation(s), and/or any other overseas or Australian partner organisation(s) involved in the delivery of a mobility project
Regional/remote	a region designated as Regional or Remote by the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard
Secondary host location	the meaning in Section 5.5.3.
Semester	the meaning as published by the host institution, provided it is a minimum of 10 weeks. Where the host institution operates trimesters rather than semesters, the trimester will be a Semester and must also be a minimum of 10 weeks
Student	a student enrolled in an Australian university throughout the duration of the mobility project
Student Code of Conduct	the Student Code of Conduct outlines the expectations of students participating in NCP mobility projects in respect of personal and professional behaviour
Student grant	the meaning in Section 5.2
Undergraduate course	<p>As defined by the Department of Education in Higher Education Administrative Information for Providers, an undergraduate course of study is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
Value with money	<p>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"> • the quality of the project proposal and activities; • fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives; • that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved; and • the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.
We / our / us	The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Term	Definition
You / your	an Australian university applying for NCP Mobility Program funding and, in the case of a consortium, the lead applicant



2024 New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholar Pre-Departure Information Webinar

Questions and Answers

This document summarises the questions raised in the Pre-Departure Information Webinar held on Wednesday 22 November 2023, with questions grouped into themes.

Scholars with further questions about their NCP scholarship or webinar information should contact their case manager.

NCP Scholarship Program Guidelines

- 1. Are we able to receive other scholarships from our home university (particularly if they are equity based)?**

The NCP 2024 Scholarship Guidelines state that you are not permitted to hold another overseas scholarship or mobility grant while on program. Equity scholarships that support your cost-of-living expenses may be approved. Please contact your case manager to discuss this as approval from DFAT may be required.

- 2. I have been awarded an NCP Mobility Grant that I am due to undertake in 2024. Can I undertake a study abroad component using this grant alongside my NCP Scholarship components (e.g., internship) or do I have to return the grant?**

Holding and undertaking an NCP Mobility grant-funded activity and participating in an NCP Scholarship program simultaneously is not permitted.

- You can participate in an NCP Mobility grant-funded activity before you commence your scholarship program in your host location.
- Once your scholarship program begins, participating in any NCP Mobility Program activities is prohibited.

- 3. Is it compulsory to undertake both an internship and language training on top of the mandatory study component or is it allowed to undertake only one of these two components?**

The NCP Scholarship Program offers three components: study, internship, and language training. While study is mandatory, you may choose to:

- Complete all three components.
- Combine study with internship or language training.
- Focus solely on study.

You are not required to do both an internship and language training.



Study Component

4. **Is it possible to change the university where I will do a study component within the approved host location if the university where I originally proposed to study is not offering the subjects I wanted to exchange students or is not teaching them in English?**

To change your host university, you must submit a variation request with supporting documentation from your home university, including:

- A new feasibility letter.
- Confirmation whether the proposed alternative university is a home university exchange partner.

Your case manager can assist with the variation request process.

5. **Where do I find advice on applying for admission and enrolling at a foreign university?**

Please contact your home university's International Liaison Officer as they will be able to guide you through the application process for your host university.

Language Training Component

6. **Can you do two language components, one in a primary host location and another in a secondary host location?**

Yes, you may undertake two language training components, one in your primary and one in your secondary host location with a study component or a full-time internship component (see section 5.2.4 of the guidelines).

The total tuition fee for both language training components cannot exceed AUD \$10,000.

7. **Are paid private courses off limits (in entirety) while at our host location, or just not covered by the NCP Scholarship?**

The NCP Scholarship will not cover tuition fees for private language training. Language training must be provided by registered accredited providers.

Internship Component

8. **Will it be possible for me to change my internship plans to have a shorter program than I had originally planned, after arriving in my host location?**

Yes, you may change your proposed internship plans and your program can be shorter than originally proposed.

**LEX 10550 - Document 03****9. Is it possible to do an internship or a second internship in a secondary host location if not part of our approved plan?**

If the proposed internship meets the objectives of the Scholarship application, you may apply for approval to add a secondary host location or an additional internship.

- Approval Required: You cannot begin internship activities until your case manager approves them.
- Duration Limit: The total duration of all full-time internships undertaken during your scholarship program cannot exceed six months (see section 5.2.2 of the guidelines).

10. Should we apply directly to institutions offering internships, such as the United Nations?

Yes, you should apply directly to organisations for internship opportunities. Many organisations have specific application deadlines and processes, which you can usually find on their websites.

Please note that securing an internship can take time. Research and understand application processes and deadlines for your preferred organisations before applying.

11. How can we find suitable internships for our area of study? The Learning Management System (LMS) only has a few opportunities posted.

The LMS is used to post information on current internship opportunities that are being offered by organisations to NCP scholars. However, it does not provide information about internship opportunities for all fields of study, and scholars should not rely on it as the sole source of internship opportunities.

Scholars will receive guidance on identifying internship opportunities at the PDT sessions in Canberra, including hearing from Alumni Mentors. You should also engage with your home university's career services and academic staff who may be able to share information and contact information on organisations in your proposed host location/s.

We also suggest you reach out to NCP Alumni at your home university for suggestions and carry out your own general research on your areas of interest.

While you are undertaking your study component or language training component at your host location, we encourage you to seek internships to avoid delays between the end of a component and the start of the subsequent component.

12. Is it possible to do a part-time internship?

You may do a part-time internship alongside a full-time language training component or full-time study component. You may not do a part-time internship as a stand-alone component.

Scholarship Financial Entitlements**13. Do we need to provide evidence of how we spend our monthly scholarship allowance (the \$3000 monthly stipend)?**

Scholars are not required to submit receipts for expenses. The monthly scholarship allowance is a contribution to your living expenses whilst on program in your host location, such as accommodation payments, food, and other daily needs.

**LEX 10550 - Document 03****14. Will my funding be cut off as soon as I complete my home university studies or would I be able to do an internship immediately after?**

Your Scholarship entitlements cover your activities for each program component. If you graduate or complete your home degree at the end of your study component, you are still entitled to funding for the internship and language training components should you choose to undertake them.

15. Can you advise on what is considered a reasonable gap between components and if there are any impacts on payments to consider?

All scholars are entitled to 28 days of Gap Leave 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 14 days in any subsequent period of an NCP Scholarship program. This is in addition to any unused Gap Leave and calculated on a pro rata basis if the Scholarship program is shorter than 19 months in duration.

Scholars will continue to receive their monthly stipend payment during approved Gap Leave.

Gap Leave and Travel**16. If scholars travel on weekends, does this count as 'Gap Leave'?**

Gap Leave, as defined in the 2024 NCP Scholarship Guidelines, is the period between program components when you are not actively undertaking study, internship, or language training.

- Travelling within your host location for the weekend whilst undertaking a program component does not count as Gap Leave.
- All travel outside your host location, even for a weekend, requires prior approval one month in advance
- If you need to travel outside your host location due to an emergency, inform your case manager three days in advance
- Remember to always keep your case manager informed of your current location. This ensures they can reach you in case of an emergency.

17. What counts as travel for which we need to notify our case manager? For example, if we visit another town or city in the same region /prefecture as our host city, does this need to be approved? (e.g., going between Kyoto and Osaka)

If you travel within your host location as per the example, you do not need to seek travel approval from your case manager. However, we appreciate receiving an email update about your travel (even for short trips), so we can update your current location for emergency contact purposes.

It is important for all scholars to always update their geo-location on the emergency assistance service App so that alerts and assistance can be provided promptly. Please always refer to the NCP Insurance Handbook to check that any activities undertaken during travel and on program are covered. For example, you are not covered for scuba-diving for leisure.

If you choose to travel outside of your host location, e.g., Singapore to Bali, you must seek approval from your case manager within the timeframes set out in the Scholarship Agreement, which is one month in advance for normal requests, and three days in advance for emergency request.

**LEX 10550 - Document 03**

- 18. If we're doing two semesters of university study, do we need to apply for Gap Leave for the break in between? For example, if semester one finishes on August 15 and semester two resumes on Oct 1st, do we need to apply for Gap Leave.**

Yes, you are required to apply for Gap Leave between study semesters. Each semester will be considered as a Study Component and the period between will be Gap Leave.

You are entitled to 28 days of Gap Leave in the first 12 months of your program (pro-rated). If the time between your two semester exceeds your Gap Leave entitlements, we suggest undertaking some language training or an internship in your host location during this time.

Variations to programs

- 19. My program starts on 01 January 2024, so how do I ensure that I can get approval on risk assessments with required 6 weeks advanced notice?**

All scholars will be contacted by their case manager by Friday 24 November 2023. For those travelling in January and February, case managers will work with you and your ILO as needed to ensure that all necessary approvals are done on time.

Pre-departure preparation

- 20. Can you advise on the best order to arrange our program? For example, should we confirm our study and internship first, and then apply for an appropriate visa, and then book accommodation and flights?**

Scholars are recommended to liaise with their home university's international office for guidance. All universities have deadlines for applications, and it is important that you can confirm admission as well as home university credit approval. Likewise, some organisations have deadlines for internship programs. Once you have confirmed your various components, you will be able to apply for an appropriate visa and arrange flights.

Please note that visa applications take time and may require documentation to confirm your planned activities in that country, such as confirmation of an internship or admission to a language school or university. Note that some visas require evidence of a return flight.

- 21. Are we free to choose any type of accommodation and have different types of accommodation for various components and host locations? For example, can we stay on campus accommodation for study component and private rental during an internship?**

Scholars are free to choose where they live in their host locations. However, it is essential that you select accommodation that is safe, secure and suitable for your personal circumstances. For example, it should be accessible and close to convenient transport and facilities. It is also important that your accommodation is sourced through legal and secure providers.



Communications and social media

22. When does the media embargo lift?

The media embargo for 2024 NCP scholars will be lifted at 9:00am (AEDT) Monday 4 December 2023.

23. Who can we contact to check if a social media post is appropriate and meets the media guidelines?

You can contact us at ncp@thepalladiumgroup.com. Attention: Communications

24. Is it acceptable to not post anything on social media throughout the program?

While social media posting is not mandatory, we do encourage it to stay connected and share experiences with the wider NCP community, as well as to inspire others.

25. How do we connect with scholars in the same location?

There will be opportunities for you to connect with your peers in the same location or region at the PDT in Canberra. We strongly recommend scholars also connect with each other through social networks. There will also be opportunities to connect with each other through your case manager.

Connecting with alumni and peers

26. Will we have access to an alumni network or people at DFAT to help organize internships?

While we may share opportunities being offered by host organisations on the LMS, finding a suitable internship is your responsibility.

Neither DFAT nor your case manager have responsibility to help you organize a suitable internship. You will have the opportunity to engage with alumni at the PDT with whom you can seek advice and tips. We also recommend you work with your home university international office and careers office for suggestions.

27. When do we find out who the Fellow for our location is, so that we can connect with them?

The NCP Fellow for your host location will be announced at the Scholar Awards Ceremony.

s 47F(1) - this page and the following pages (72-136) are exempt in full and the following pages have been removed

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, 5 April 2023 6:56 PM
To: s 47F(1)
Cc:
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Scholar requesting approval for Mobility grant [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: RE: Scholar questions - 29 April 2022 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s 47F(1)

We received a similar question from NCP scholar s 47F(1) in April 2022, and our advice (attached) at the time was *"The NCP scholar may receive an NCP mobility grant prior to the commencement of their NCP scholarship program. The NCP mobility program must be completed prior to the commencement of the NCP scholarship program."*

The above advice still stands. To answer your question below, that scholar is eligible to undertake a NCP mobility program prior to commencing their first NCP scholarship program component.

A related question from another scholar s 47F(1) in August 2022 was whether they can pause their scholarship program (which they had already commenced) to undertake a mobility program before resuming their scholarship program. This request was not approved (our advice was sent to you on 16 August 2022).

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director | New Colombo Plan
Global Programs and Partnerships Branch | Development Policy Division
M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 47F(1) @thepalladiumgroup.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 5 April 2023 6:19 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Scholar requesting approval for Mobility grant
Importance: High

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Could you please confirm that the following clause in the Guidelines mean that any Scholar who has been awarded a scholarship, regardless of whether they have commenced or not is ineligible for a Mobility grant:
Unless otherwise approved by DFAT, Scholars may not commence another offshore scholarship or mobility grant while undertaking their Scholarship program.

The Scholar will commence their program with Study in Oct 2023. The Mobility project is from 17 June-15 July and the deadline for applications is tomorrow.

We believe the scholar is not eligible.

Kind regards

s 47F(1)

Manager: Scholarships and Mobility | New Colombo Plan Administration and Support Services

Palladium

Level 5, 12 Pirie Street Adelaide SA 5000 Australia

M s 47F(1) | E s 47F(1) [@thepalladiumgroup.com](mailto:info@thepalladiumgroup.com)



The New Colombo Plan (NCP) is an Australian Government initiative.

Palladium delivers NCP Administration and Support Services

on behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



Palladium respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and learn and pays respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their elders, past, present, and future.