New Colombo Plan Mobility Program: 2023 Round
Advice to applicants

This document should be read in conjunction with the 2023 New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program Guidelines (available on GrantConnect). The Guidelines outline eligibility requirements, assessment criteria and how funding will be allocated and administered.

- **Project title**
  The project title should be succinct and include the host location, discipline/subject and type of educational activity. For example: Vanuatu Nursing Practicum; Taiwan Business Internships; Fiji Marine Science Fieldwork; Singapore International Business Internships; Korea Engineering Semester Study.

- **Project description**
  While the project description does not contribute to the assessment score, a clear project description will help assessors understand the project's objectives and rationale. The Guidelines, and the instructions on the application form, outline the information required in the project description, including estimated costs.

- **Duration of mobility experiences**
  A project may include durations of different lengths (i.e. it is not necessary for all students participating in a mobility project to travel for the same length of time). To reflect this, ISEO now has a 'Various' option under the 'Length of study' question.

- **Host locations**
  Travel cannot proceed to host locations, for which Smartraveller recommends 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' at the time of departure (see Guidelines Section 2.5 (b)). Applicants are strongly discouraged from proposing programs to a host location, or a region within a host location, with such a recommendation, except where that advice is likely to be short-term, for example due to the temporary impact of a natural disaster.

  Every mobility project must nominate a physical primary host location (i.e. applications cannot be for wholly-virtual projects).

  All funding sought in the application (entered in the Finances tab in ISEO) must be for in-person (as opposed to virtual/online) costs. Hybrid delivery can be included in the program proposal (i.e. the project may include some virtual mobility), by selecting 'virtual' as a secondary host location and including details of the virtual component/s in the project description.

  After a project is approved, if a university wishes to have it delivered virtually (either wholly or in part), for example, due to continued travel restrictions to the host location, a variation request must be submitted in ISEO for the Secretariat's consideration.

  As we continue to experience uncertainties related to the impact of COVID-19 on international travel, we encourage institutions to develop flexible projects that could be adapted for face-to-face or virtual delivery.

- **Student grant amounts**
  Within a project, a university may choose to provide grants of different amounts to different groups of participating students (see Section 5.2 of the Guidelines). Please note:
  - Students travelling together to the same location/s to undertake the same activities for the same duration, must receive the same grant amount.
  - Different grant amounts may be provided under a project where the mode, duration, location and/or host university is not the same for different groups of participating students.

- **Student grant numbers**
  Applicants should ensure they only seek mobility grants for the number of students they reasonably expect to recruit during the mobility program term (1 January 2023 to 30 September 2024). Overestimating student numbers can result in NCP funds not being awarded to other eligible applications.

- **Budget**
  In the project description, the applicant must provide a budget, including:
  - the number of students participating in the project
  - the cost per student
  - the average grant amount per student participating in the project (where there are different lengths of experience within the project). The university has flexibility to decide how many students will participate in each mode/length of experience of the project. This should be outlined in the project description.

- **Project partners**
  Applicants are required to list project partners and any third-party providers in ISEO.

  Universities must exercise due diligence in their choice of partners, including investigating partners' capacity to comply with NCP Guidelines (for example, by having an appropriate risk management process in place).

  Universities should consider how their projects impact local communities. For example, paying to volunteer can lead to demand-driven activities in disadvantaged communities. Applicants whose projects include volunteering overseas should read DFAT advice on smart volunteering and Smartraveller advice on responsible volunteering.

- **Applying for further funding for existing projects**
  Universities may seek funding for projects that have been funded in previous NCP mobility rounds. These will be assessed alongside applications for new projects.

- **Priority themes**
  While NCP Mobility projects may focus on any eligible subject area, applicants are encouraged to consider projects that support linkages aligned with Australian priorities, for example:
  - tackling shared challenges in the Indo-Pacific such as climate change, cybersecurity, post-COVID recovery, regional stability and economic growth
  - embracing innovation and new ways of working, such as clean energy, ecommerce, e-health and engineering

- building capacity in areas such as education, health, transport, environmental management, governance and disaster preparedness
- increasing trade and investment opportunities, and economic recovery from COVID-19

- **Assessment and selection**
  The four assessment criteria are weighted equally.

  The final selection of projects will consider the degree to which proposals advance the program's objectives, including:
  - Australian foreign policy considerations
  - the range and diversity of host locations
  - likely impact, with preference given to a longer duration in-country (particularly semester-length projects)
  - relative value for money
  - the university's past performance in meeting reporting requirements and accurately estimating student numbers

- **Lessons from previous rounds**
  Assessors look for evidence of applications demonstrating the requirements for each criterion. Applications that scored highly in previous rounds:
  - clearly and concisely addressed all elements of each assessment criterion
  - provided practical examples that demonstrated how the project would advance the NCP strategic objective and outcomes
  - demonstrated direct links that would be established and/or supported between Australian institutions and those in the Indo-Pacific, and how relationships would be sustained beyond NCP funding (for example, through joint projects, reciprocal student/staff mobility, joint delivery of academic programs, joint research/innovation and/or alumni engagement)
  - explained the choice of host location and demonstrated an understanding of the local context (for example, explaining what Australian students will gain by studying/interning in a particular country/location/institution)
  - provided specific examples of how the project would support participation across a diverse range of students (e.g. not just referring to university or government policies).

  Compared to successful applications, unsuccessful applications in previous rounds may have:
  - lacked specific details about project activities
  - not detailed how links with the Indo-Pacific (institutional and people-to-people) would be sustained beyond the life of the project
  - not provided details of how the project would support participation of students from a diverse range of backgrounds
  - been less clear about how the use of third-party providers would help build lasting linkages between Australian and Indo-Pacific institutions, and how these linkages would be sustained beyond NCP funding. Note: third-party providers are not considered to be NCP project partners as they are paid for their participation
  - contained duplication/repetition across separate applications from the same university, and/or factual errors.