



Australian Government



NEW COLOMBO PLAN

Connect to Australia's future - study in the region

New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2021 Round Guidelines

Guidelines released:	19 February 2020
University nominations open:	24 June 2020
University nominations close:	21 July 2020
Student applications open:	22 July 2020
Student applications close:	11.30 pm AEST 18 August 2020
Commonwealth policy and administering entity:	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Enquiries:	Any questions should be sent no later than 5.00pm AEST on 11 August 2020, to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted or restricted competitive

Contents

1	New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program: 2021 Round processes	4
1.1	Introduction	6
2	About the grant program	6
2.1	Strategic Objective and outcomes of the NCP	6
2.2	About the NCP Scholarship Program	6
2.3	Legislative authority	7
2.4	Roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government	7
2.5	Roles and responsibilities of Australian Universities	7
2.6	Roles and responsibilities of Applicants	8
2.7	Roles and responsibilities of the Support Services Organisation	8
3	Grant amount and grant period	9
3.1	NCP funding commitment	9
3.2	Grant period	9
4	Eligibility criteria	9
4.1	Who is eligible to apply for a Scholarship?	9
4.2	Nominations	10
4.3	Who is not eligible to apply for a Scholarship?	11
5	What the grant money can be used for	11
5.1	Eligible Scholarship Program activities	11
5.2	Study Component	11
5.3	Internship and Mentorship	12
5.4	Language Training	13
5.5	Eligible locations	13
5.6	Permitted Gaps	16
5.7	Community engagement and advocacy	17
5.8	Scholarship Benefits	17
6	The assessment criteria	21
6.1	Assessment criteria	21
6.2	Other considerations	21
6.3	Selection of Fellows	22
7	How to apply	22
7.1	Overview	22
7.2	Written Applications	23
7.3	Referee reports	23
7.4	Attachments to the Application	24
7.5	Timing of grant opportunity processes	24
7.6	Questions during the application process	25
8	The grant selection process	25

8.1	Assessment of Applications.....	25
8.2	Who will approve the award of Scholarships?	26
9	Notification of application outcomes.....	26
9.1	Feedback on Applications.....	26
9.2	Offer and acceptance processes	26
10	Successful grant applications.....	27
10.1	Scholarship Agreement	27
10.2	Variations to Scholarship Programs.....	27
10.3	Specific legislation and policies.....	28
10.4	How DFAT pays the grant	28
10.5	Taxation	28
11	Announcement of grants.....	28
12	How DFAT monitors grant activity.....	28
12.1	Keeping DFAT informed	28
12.2	Reporting	28
12.3	Evaluation	29
13	Probity.....	29
13.1	Enquiries and feedback.....	29
13.2	Further information.....	29
13.3	Conflicts of Interest.....	30
13.4	Privacy.....	30
13.5	Confidential Information.....	31
13.6	Freedom of information	32
14	Glossary.....	33

1 New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program: 2021 Round processes

The New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This scholarship opportunity is part of the above grant program, which contributes to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)'s Portfolio Budget Statement Outcome 1 (The advancement of Australia's international strategic, security and economic interests including through bilateral, regional and multilateral engagement on Australian Government foreign, trade and international development policy priorities). DFAT works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)



The scholarship opportunity opens

DFAT publishes the NCP Scholarship Guidelines on GrantConnect. Australian Universities nominate eligible candidates.



Applicants complete and submit an Application

DFAT will invite nominees to apply for a Scholarship. To apply, nominees must complete the application form and address all of the Eligibility Requirements and Assessment Criteria to be considered for a Scholarship.



DFAT assesses all Applications

DFAT assesses Applications against the Eligibility Requirements. DFAT assesses eligible Applications against the Assessment Criteria including overall consideration of Value with money and compares them to other Applications. DFAT invites shortlisted Applicants to attend an interview.



Selection panels make recommendations

Selection panels advise DFAT on the merits of each recommended Applicant.



Scholarship decisions are made

The decision maker decides which Applications are successful.



DFAT notifies Applicants and their Australian University of the outcome

DFAT advises Applicants and their nominating Australian University of the outcome of their Applications. DFAT may not notify unsuccessful Applicants until Scholarship Agreements have been executed with successful Applicants.



DFAT enters into a Scholarship Agreement with successful Applicants

DFAT will enter into a Scholarship Agreement with successful Applicants.



NCP Scholars undertake their Scholarship Program

Scholars undertake the Scholarship Program in accordance with the Scholarship Agreement. A Support Services Organisation will work with Scholars to assist with arrangements, monitor their progress and make payments.



Evaluation

DFAT evaluates the specific Scholarship activity and the NCP Scholarship Program as a whole. DFAT bases this evaluation on information from various sources.

1.1 Introduction

These Guidelines provide information about the 2021 round of the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program (NCP Scholarship Program), including Eligibility Requirements and processes for selecting scholarship recipients.

Before applying, Applicants must read these Guidelines and the [Advice to Applicants](#). These Guidelines take priority to the extent of any inconsistency with the Advice to Applicants.

These Guidelines set out:

- a. the NCP Strategic Objective and outcomes
- b. Eligibility Requirements and Assessment Criteria
- c. how Applications are selected
- d. how successful Applicants are notified and how Scholars receive payments
- e. how Scholars are monitored and evaluated, and
- f. responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

Capitalised terms used in these Guidelines are defined in the glossary at Section 14.

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 undergraduates to study and undertake internships in the region.

The NCP has two programs: scholarships (for study up to 19 months) and mobility grants (for short and longer-term study). Both programs prioritise Internships, Mentorships and Language Training.

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:

- a. increase the number and diversity of Australian university undergraduates with Indo-Pacific capability
- b. deepen people-to-people and institutional relationships between Australia and the Indo-Pacific region, and
- c. students and alumni connected with leaders in government, business and civil society in the Indo-Pacific

DFAT administers the NCP according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines](#) (CGRGs).

2.2 About the NCP Scholarship Program

The NCP Scholarship Program provides around 120 Scholarships annually to a diverse range of Australian undergraduates studying a range of disciplines in up to 40 Indo-Pacific locations. Scholars are encouraged to undertake study, Language Training and an Internship and/or Mentorship for up to 19 months.

The NCP Scholarship Program is developing an active Scholar alumni community, supporting previous Scholars to share their experiences, promote the NCP and continue to develop knowledge of and professional links with the Indo-Pacific region.

2.3 Legislative authority

The authority under which public money is, or may become payable by the Australian Government for the NCP Scholarship Program can be found in Item 9, Part 4 of Schedule 1AB of the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997* (Cth).

2.4 Roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government

DFAT is responsible for strategic leadership, policy, administration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, business liaison, Internships, Mentorships, public diplomacy and alumni for the NCP.

DFAT manages the Guidelines and selection processes of the NCP Scholarship Program. Departmental officers and third party service providers who are involved in the selection processes have the skills and experience to assess Applications. All personnel are subject to the CGRGs and will complete a declaration covering issues associated with Conflict of Interest.

DFAT will consider reasonable accommodation to facilitate participation of Applicants with a disability.

DFAT is not responsible for arranging Study Components, Internships, Mentorships, Language Training, travel arrangements (including visas and accommodation). Scholars, in consultation with their Home Universities, Host Institutions, Host Organisations, Language Training Providers, and Case Managers are responsible for determining and carrying out their approved Scholarship Program.

The NCP Secretariat within DFAT is the first point of contact for Applicants and Australian Universities on administrative matters, including eligibility for the NCP Scholarship Program, nominations, Applications and attendance at interview.

2.5 Roles and responsibilities of Australian Universities

Each Australian University may nominate up to ten Applicants for the 2021 round of the NCP Scholarship Program. In doing so, it is the responsibility of the Australian University to obtain consent from Applicants for their personal details to be provided to DFAT as part of the nomination process. It is also the responsibility of the Australian University to ensure that the email addresses provided for the nominees are up-to-date and accurate.

After the closing of the nomination period, the Australian University is responsible for confirming with their nominated Applicant(s) that they have received an email invitation from the Australian Government to submit an Application. The Australian University must also confirm that the Applicants' proposed Study Components are credit-bearing. The Australian University should assist Applicants to obtain evidence of acceptance by a Host Institution and are encouraged to support them to arrange Internships, Mentorships and Language Training.

Interested Australian Universities are requested to nominate a NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships (and an alternative contact, where possible) who will submit nominations on behalf of the Australian University and receive updates throughout the selection process. The NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships must provide consent for their name and contact details to be published on the NCP Website and to be contacted by the Australian Government regarding the NCP Scholarship Program.

Each participating Australian University must work with Applicants to undertake risk assessments of Host Locations proposed by Applicants (see Section 5.5.4).

DFAT has entered into contracts with third party service providers (Support Services Organisations) to deliver support services during the application period, while Scholars are on award and when they transition to the NCP alumni program. The service providers are permitted with DFAT's specific consent, to contact and request the assistance of NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships when required.

2.6 Roles and responsibilities of Applicants

Each Applicant is responsible for ensuring their Application is complete, including supporting documentation and referee reports, and is submitted by the Closing Time. Applications submitted after the Closing Time will not be considered. Applicants must meet any costs associated with preparing and lodging their Application.

The decision to apply for and, if successful, accept a Scholarship is the responsibility of the Applicant. The Australian Government will not be liable for any loss, damage, injury or harm that might be suffered during, or in connection with, the Scholarship Program. Successful Applicants are responsible for obtaining and complying with the appropriate visa(s) for the duration of their Scholarship.

Applicants must make their own enquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel, including travel to the Host Location(s), and be fully informed about the risks at all times. Applicants are required to read carefully the travel advice for their Host Location(s) and other relevant travel information pages on the Smartraveller website (see www.smartraveller.gov.au) for information about risks overseas and how they can prepare for overseas travel.

Applicants are strongly discouraged from proposing program components in a Host Location, or region within a Host Location, for which Smartraveller travel advice recommends "Do not travel" or "Reconsider your need to travel" (except where the travel advice may be short term e.g. due to an unforeseen adverse event). Travel cannot proceed to such locations if that travel advice remains in place at the time of departure. In the case of 'Reconsider your need to travel' locations, Applicants and their Home Universities may consult further with the NCP Secretariat. Successful Applicants must subscribe to the relevant travel advisories on Smartraveller prior to Commencement of their Scholarship. If a crisis page on the Smartraveller website is activated during a major overseas incident, Scholars who are in those Host Location(s) must register their details on the page.

Applicants are required to exhibit professional behaviour throughout the selection process and, if successful, will be expected to act as ambassadors for Australia and the NCP during their Scholarship Program. Evidence of unprofessional behaviour, including but not limited to, misrepresentation of the truth in an Application or at an interview, or inappropriate social media posts or public commentary referencing the NCP Scholarship Program can be grounds for not awarding or for cancelling an awarded Scholarship. Further requirements are set out in the NCP Scholarship Agreement, NCP Media and Publication Guidelines, and NCP Student Code of Conduct.

Successful Applicants will be expected to work with, and comply with the directions given by, the Support Services Organisation (a third party service provider contracted by DFAT).

2.7 Roles and responsibilities of the Support Services Organisation

The Support Services Organisation is responsible for allocating a Case Manager and providing high quality assistance and program management for each Scholar. The services provided by the Support Services Organisation include, but are not limited to, providing Scholars with:

- a. pre-departure support
- b. a briefing pack of important information
- c. Scholarship allowances
- d. advice and guidance during the Scholarship
- e. assistance with Scholarship variation requests, and
- f. assistance with a Scholar's return to Australia on completion of the Scholarship.

3 Grant amount and grant period

3.1 NCP funding commitment

Funding for the NCP supports:

- a. a prestigious Scholarship Program for up to 19 months of study, Language Training, Internships and/or Mentorships, and
- b. a flexible Mobility Grant Program for both short and longer-term study, Language Training, Internships, Mentorships and research.

Total funding for the NCP for financial years 2020-21 to 2022-23 is outlined below. It covers all aspects of the NCP administration, including the Scholarship Program and Mobility Program funding.

- **2020-21:** \$50,933,000
- **2021-22:** \$50,933,000
- **2022-23:** \$50,933,000

Information regarding specific Scholarship Benefits is set out in Section 5.8.

3.2 Grant period

An Applicant's proposed Scholarship Program must be for a Scholarship Term:

- a. of between three and 19 months in duration, and
- b. commencing on or between 1 January 2021 and 15 December 2021.

4 Eligibility criteria

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a Scholarship?

To be eligible for a Scholarship, and to remain eligible during the Scholarship Program if a Scholarship is awarded, Applicants must:

- a. have been 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 Primary Location or any Secondary Location
- d. be enrolled in and undertaking, until completion of all Study Components, at least one Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree unit at an on-shore campus of an Australian University

- 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 2021
- f. have achieved a minimum 70 per cent graded average or equivalent for their undergraduate course at the time of Application, as determined by the nominating Home University
- g. not be a previous recipient of a Scholarship under the NCP Scholarship Program, and
- h. not be an employee of the branch of DFAT that administers the NCP.

Successful Applicants are not permitted to commence another Australian Government funded off-shore scholarship or mobility grant (including under a NCP Mobility Program grant) while undertaking their Scholarship Program.

4.2 Nominations

Applicants must be nominated by their Home University in order to apply for a Scholarship. Eligible students who are interested in applying for a Scholarship should contact the NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships or the international office of their Home University. A list of NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships is available at www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/Scholarship-program/Pages/Scholarship-program.aspx.

Each Australian University is invited to nominate up to ten students enrolled at that Australian University (nominees are not ranked in any order by the Australian University). Each Australian University will determine its own process for selecting nominees, but is encouraged to consider the Eligibility Requirements and Assessment Criteria when conducting its nomination process.

DFAT strongly encourages Australian Universities to ensure their nominees are representative of the diversity of the Australian undergraduate population.

Nominations from Australian Universities must be submitted online through <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>. DFAT will provide the Australian University's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships with instructions on how to access the online platform and submit nominations (see Section 13.2 for contact details).

Applicants should be aware that the following details will be requested from their Home University in the online nomination form:

- a. name
- b. Gender
- c. date of birth
- d. email address
- e. mobile phone
- f. degree in which the nominee is enrolled
- g. Academic Transcript (official)
- h. intended Primary Location, and
- i. confirmation that a police check has been conducted for the purpose of the Application. The Australian University is required as part of the nomination process to forward any adverse findings from that police check to the NCP Secretariat.

All Applicants are required to undergo a police check prior to submitting an Application. This police check must not be dated earlier than 1 May 2020. It is an important consideration of the Australian Government that a Scholar will enhance the reputation of Australia and the NCP overseas. A

criminal record will not automatically disqualify an Applicant from receiving a Scholarship. However, if a successful Applicant is found to have a criminal record or conviction, then DFAT may revoke or refuse to grant a Scholarship to the Applicant.

The Australian University is required to ensure that it has appropriate policies in place relating to the handling of Personal Information, and has obtained the Applicant's express consent to deal with and provide the Applicant's Personal Information to DFAT for the purposes of the NCP Scholarship Program.

Applicants are also required to agree to the terms of use of such Personal Information (which are set out in these Guidelines at Section 13.4) when submitting their Application.

4.3 Who is not eligible to apply for a Scholarship?

Individuals are not eligible to apply if they do not satisfy all Eligibility Requirements in Section 4.1.

5 What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible Scholarship Program activities

To be an eligible Scholarship Program, the Applicant's proposed Scholarship Program must:

- a. include at least one Study Component which must commence within three months following the Scholarship Program Commencement date
- b. be for a Scholarship Term:
 - i. of between three and 19 months in duration, and
 - ii. commencing on or between 1 January 2021 and 15 December 2021, and
- c. at all times during the Scholarship Term, involve the Scholar undertaking either:
 - i. a Study Component
 - ii. a Full Time Internship Component
 - iii. Full Time Language Training, or
 - iv. a Permitted Gap.

In addition to meeting the requirements in Section 5.1a to c above, Scholarship Programs may also include, as set out in this Section 5:

- a. an Internship Component undertaken concurrently with a Study Component or Language Training
- b. a Mentorship undertaken concurrently with a Study Component, Full Time Internship Component or Full Time Language Training, or
- c. Language Training undertaken concurrently with a Study Component or Internship Component.

5.2 Study Component

5.2.1 General

As set out in Section a, it is mandatory to undertake at least one Study Component as part of a Scholarship Program. To qualify as a Study Component, 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 honours 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 or Bachelor Honours Degree. Courses that provide whole or partial credit towards a Concurrent Diploma (in addition to full-time academic credit towards a Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree) are also permitted, and
- d. for Scholars studying a research-based honours program, be supervised by an academic from their Host Institution (and Scholars are required in their Application to describe the benefits of undertaking their research program at their chosen Host Location).

Scholarship Programs are permitted to have up to one Academic Year of Study Components. However, each study period as part of the Academic Year is regarded as a separate Study Component. If the Scholar is not undertaking a Full Time Internship or Full Time Language Training in the relevant period, they will need to apply and have a Permitted Gap approved for any period between one Study Component finishing and the next Study Component commencing.

5.2.2 Host Institutions

Study Components must be undertaken at a Host Institution that is established and has its primary headquarters in the Host Location where the Study Component is undertaken, unless otherwise approved. Generally a Study Component will not be approved to be undertaken at an offshore campus of a Host Institution that is established or headquartered outside of the Host Location. However, undertaking Study Components at offshore campuses of a Host Institution established in or headquartered outside of the Host Location will be considered for approval on a case by case basis, where:

- a. there is a demonstrated benefit to the overall NCP Scholarship Program
- b. the body is established or has its primary headquarters in another eligible Host Location, or
- c. in respect of offshore campuses of Australian Universities, the Home University provides confirmation that:
 - i. there are no local Host Institutions in the proposed location that offer relevant courses that would receive credit from the Home University, and
 - ii. the offshore campus offers a genuine local experience, where Australian students are the minority of the student body and Scholars are taught predominantly by local and international academics.

5.3 Internship and Mentorship

In addition to at least one Study Component, where Host Location visa requirements permit, Scholars are strongly encouraged to propose to undertake one or more Internships or Mentorships as part of their Scholarship Program.

Internships and Mentorships do not need to be confirmed at the time of Application.

Once awarded the Scholarship, Scholars will be able to access the NCP Internship and Mentorship Network to identify Internship and Mentorship opportunities made available by registered organisations, although Internships and Mentorships do not have to be arranged through the network.

5.3.1 Internship Component

An Internship is a professional work experience in which a Scholar has learning goals relevant to their academic qualification and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies. Internships comprise an opportunity that enables Scholars to have immersive experiences in work environments at the Host Location.

To be eligible as an Internship Component as part of a Scholarship Program, an Internship:

- a. must be undertaken:
 - i. on a Full Time basis (which means for between 22 and 38 hours per week) for a maximum of up to six months, prior or subsequent to a Study Component (subject to Section 5.1(a)), or
 - ii. on a part-time basis concurrent with a Study Component or a Full Time Language Training Component, and
- b. must be undertaken in the Primary Location, or in a Secondary Location in accordance with Section 5.5.

An Internship must be undertaken face to face. An Internship is not permitted to be undertaken online or remotely.

An Internship may be paid or unpaid. An Internship must not incur a cost - attending informal or formal paid courses does not count as an Internship.

Scholars are encouraged to seek academic credit for their Internship, but this is not mandatory.

5.3.2 Mentorship

A Mentorship is 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. Mentorships may only be undertaken concurrently with a Study Component, Full Time Internship Component, or Full Time Language Training.

5.4 Language Training

Scholars are strongly encouraged to undertake Language Training as part of the Scholarship Program. To be eligible as part of a Scholarship Program, Language Training must:

- a. be undertaken in the same Host Location as a Study Component or a Full Time Internship Component
- b. be in an official language of the Host Location where it is undertaken
- c. be delivered formally and face-to-face by a bona fide training provider (as assessed by DFAT in its sole and absolute discretion) ('**Language Training Provider**'), and
- d. be for a period of up to six months, undertaken either:
 - i. Full Time, which means for a minimum of 15 contact hours per week, or
 - ii. part time concurrently with a Study Component or a Full Time Internship Component.

Scholars are encouraged to seek academic credit for their Language Training, but this is not mandatory.

5.5 Eligible locations

5.5.1 Host Locations

Scholarship Programs must be conducted only in the following Host Locations:

Eligible 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 Locations

A Primary 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 Locations

DFAT prefers that Scholarship Programs be conducted in a single eligible Host Location (with all Study Component(s) at a single Host Institution). However, Applicants may apply to undertake their Scholarship Programs in more than one eligible 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 ('**Secondary Location**'), the Applicant must nominate a Primary Location on their Application. DFAT will consider requests for a Secondary Location on a case by case basis. When proposing a Secondary Location, Applicants must explain how this better achieves the Strategic Objective and outcomes.

If a Scholar undertakes Scholarship Program components at Secondary Locations, the total time spent at Secondary Locations combined must not exceed the total time spent at the Primary Location.

Approval of a Secondary Location does not entitle a Scholar to receive additional Travel Allowance or Establishment Allowance (see Section 5.8.3).

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. Applicants must carefully consider the risks of travel to all 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, and to ensure they are fully informed about the risks at all times.

If a Scholar is having difficulty arranging a relevant visa, the Scholar should contact their assigned Case Manager to seek advice on obtaining visas in the relevant Host Location, based on past Scholars' experience. Scholars should obtain travel medical advice, including any necessary vaccinations, prior to commencement of travel.

Scholars must not travel to a Host Location or region within a Host Location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller travel advice recommends 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' (see www.smartraveller.gov.au). In the case of 'Reconsider your need to travel'

locations, Scholars and their Home Universities may consult further with the NCP Secretariat. Where the Smartraveller travel 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 program, DFAT will work with the Scholar to identify an alternate Host Location if required.

Applicants must 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. This includes the Applicant working with their Home University to address the issues identified in the risk assessment for Host Locations undertaken in Section 2.5.

5.6 Permitted Gaps

During the Scholarship Term, gaps may be approved on the terms set out in the Scholarship Agreement ('**Permitted Gaps**'), during which the Scholar is not required to undertake the Scholarship Program on a Full Time basis in accordance with Section 5.1c.

A Permitted Gap must not result in the Scholarship Term exceeding 19 months; or include any additional costs to the NCP Scholarship Program, the Service Provider, the Host Institution(s), the Host Organisation(s) (if any) or Language Training Provider (if any).

A Permitted Gap is:

- a. Gap Leave - when there is a gap between the end of and subsequent commencement of a Study Component(s), Full Time Language Training or Internship Component(s) and is for a maximum of:
 - i. in the first 12 month period of a Scholarship Program, four weeks, and
 - ii. in any subsequent period of a Scholarship Program, up to two weeks (in addition to any unused Gap Leave under Section 5.6ai).

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.

- a. **Leave of Absence** - for a maximum of:
 - i. in the first 12 month period of a Scholarship Program, two weeks, and
 - ii. in any subsequent period of a Scholarship Program, up to one week (in addition to any unused Leave of Absence under Section 5.6ai).

A Leave of Absence must be for personal or professional development, compassionate and compelling reasons, or for issues relating to the Scholar's safety and security.

- a. **Suspension** - a suspension may be applied for on the terms set out in the Scholarship Agreement, including where a Scholar has exhausted their entitlement to apply for a Leave of Absence. DFAT may also require a Suspension in accordance with the process in the Scholarship Agreement.

Except in relation to the Insurance, Scholarship Benefits are unaffected by approved Gap Leave or a Leave of Absence. During any period of Suspension, there is no entitlement to or payment of Scholarship Benefits (and no amounts are payable following the Suspension for costs incurred during the Suspension).

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 policy terms for the Insurance and

taking out any appropriate alternative or additional insurance cover where the Insurance is impacted by a Permitted Gap.

5.7 Community engagement and advocacy

The Australian Government, including through its network of diplomatic missions and offices overseas, may invite Scholars to participate in a range of events during their Scholarship.

These activities are in addition to the formal eligibility requirements for the Scholarship Program. Scholars are strongly encouraged to share the experiences of their Scholarship Program with the NCP Secretariat, other students and their community, including through engaging with the NCP alumni community and through social media. They are strongly encouraged to participate in activities that will encourage others to participate in the NCP, and to advocate for the NCP and its Strategic Objective and outcomes, including promoting the benefits of studying and undertaking work placements in the Indo-Pacific region.

5.8 Scholarship Benefits

5.8.1 Overview

Scholars are responsible for their own financial circumstances while undertaking their Scholarship Program. Before applying for a Scholarship, Applicants must consider their personal financial 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 5.8.2, 5.8.3 and 5.8.4 during the Scholarship Term, depending on their Scholarship Program and whether they continue to meet the requirements for each Scholarship Benefit in the Scholarship Agreement.

The terms on which Scholars will receive Scholarship Benefits are further set out in the Scholarship Agreement. In most cases, the Scholarship Benefits are either 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 and not for any other purpose.

All amounts set out in this Section 5.8 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 may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

5.8.2 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. The Scholar will be responsible for any tuition fees in excess of the per activity maximum amount.

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 place 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 10.2.</p> <p>2. Applicable student service 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>	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
			(c) the Host Institution certifies in writing that the costs are mandatory for completion of the Study Component, and (d) an invoice for the relevant amount is issued by the Host Institution.	
2	Full Time Language Training	More than one month in total to a maximum of six months Full Time Language Training may be undertaken in blocks, provided that the total cumulative duration does not exceed six months	Fees for the Language Training payable to the Language Training Provider	Up to \$10,000
3	Full Time Language Training	Up to or equal to one month duration in total Full Time Language Training may be undertaken in blocks, provided that the total cumulative duration does not exceed one month	Fees for the Language Training payable to the Language Training Provider	Up to \$1,500, minus any amount paid under item 4.
4	Part Time Language Training	Any period	Fees for the Language Training payable to the Language Training Provider	Up to \$1,500, minus any amount paid under item 3.

The maximum amount that the Scholar will be paid as Tuition Fees for all activities undertaken during a Scholarship Program 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.

5.8.3 Allowances

- a. **A Travel Allowance** of \$2,500 paid to the Scholar (\$1,250 on travel to the Host Location and \$1,250 on return to Australia at the end of the Scholarship Term) to contribute to costs associated with the Scholar's eligible travel to and from the Host Location.
- b. **An Establishment Allowance** of \$2,500 paid to the Scholar to contribute to the costs associated with the Scholar settling in at their Host Location. Fellows (see Section 6.3) will receive an additional payment of \$1,000 ('**Fellows Allowance**') to purchase study materials for use during their Scholarship and to contribute to costs associated with the Scholar's promotion of the NCP. Scholars that are appointed as a Fellow under more than one applicable award will receive a Fellows Allowance of \$1,000 for each position.
- c. **A Scholarship Allowance** paid to the Scholar as a monthly stipend during the Scholarship Term of up to \$2,500 to contribute to the Scholar's basic living costs in their Host Location.
- d. **A Mental Health Allowance** of \$1,000 paid to the Scholar as a reimbursement to contribute to the cost of providers of Mental Health Services. The Mental Health Allowance provides reimbursement in relation to the cost of any provider of Mental Health Services, including professionals (such as psychologists and social workers) who are qualified or registered to assist with specific personal issues, such as coping with life changes and fostering mental wellbeing.

5.8.4 Other Scholarship Benefits

Scholars also receive:

5.8.4.1 Insurance

Health and travel insurance while outside of Australia, under an existing policy of cover and subject to certain terms and exclusions (the '**Insurance**'). On a case by case basis, the Scholar may also be considered for, and receive additional insurance cover for, an existing condition that is not typically covered by the standard terms of insurance.

5.8.4.2 Allocation of Case Manager

A dedicated Case Manager from the Support Services Organisation for the duration of their Scholarship Term who provides services including pre-departure briefings, advice on health and travel insurance, advice and assistance relating to accommodation, and payment of Scholarship Benefits.

5.8.4.3 Private Sector Sponsorship

Scholarships may also be sponsored by Private Sector Organisations (i.e. not DFAT).

DFAT has entered into sponsorship agreements with Private Sector Organisations (each a '**Sponsor**') for the provision of in-kind benefits to the NCP. Sponsors are able to associate their brand with the NCP through selected Scholarships, such as the NCP (Business Name) Scholarship for (Location). This is known as a '**Sponsored Scholarship**'. Benefits can be directed to Scholars and may include enhanced Internship packages, training opportunities (such as leadership training) and other benefits. Agreements will be put in place regarding Scholar benefits and obligations under the Sponsored Scholarship.

All Scholars are eligible for Sponsored Scholarships.

In determining Sponsored Scholarships, Sponsors provide DFAT with a set of criteria based on discipline, location, Host Institution/Home University, or other relevant factors. For example, the Sponsored Scholarship may be for top ranked business students studying in Singapore.

Following the selection process set out in Section 8, DFAT will prepare a shortlist of successful Applicants who have accepted the NCP Scholarship, and who meet the criteria for any Sponsored Scholarship. With the consent of the Scholar on the shortlist, DFAT will provide the Scholar's contact details to the relevant Sponsor. Sponsors will contact the Scholars directly, and determine who from the shortlist will be the recipient of the Sponsored Scholarship.

Scholars who have been selected to receive a Sponsored Scholarship will negotiate directly with the Sponsor on the timing of the receipt of any additional benefits – such as training opportunities.

6 The assessment criteria

6.1 Assessment criteria

In addition to meeting the Eligibility Requirements, Applicants will be assessed in accordance with the process set out in Section 8 and against the following Assessment Criteria (for both the written Application and the Applicant's performance at interview).

6.1.1 Academic excellence at the tertiary level *(25 per cent weighting)*

Assessment of this criterion will relate to:

- a. the Applicant's graded average achieved in tertiary studies (based on Home University grading), and
- b. ungraded academic achievements, such as academic awards and commendations, publications, or other examples of academic excellence at the tertiary level.

The Applicant's communication skills, higher-order cognitive and critical thinking skills, and engagement in learning will also be assessed. High School academic achievements will not be considered.

6.1.2 Leadership and engagement in the community *(30 per cent weighting)*

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated leadership in the community, including volunteer and not-for-profit roles and/or activities they have undertaken in their local community, nationally, overseas and/or in their university.

6.1.3 Adaptability and resilience *(20 per cent weighting)*

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated ability to adapt to change, thrive in a different environment, and resilience in the face of challenges.

6.1.4 Ability to contribute to NCP 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, and how the Applicant and their proposed Scholarship Program would contribute to the 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:
 - i. longer periods of Study Components

- ii. an Internship Component or a Mentorship
 - iii. a period (or longer periods) of Language Training, and/or
 - iv. a 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 Home Universities, or
 - e. Applications that demonstrate a better achievement of the Strategic Objective and outcomes.

6.3 Selection of Fellows

Applicants may be appointed as Fellows under the NCP on a merit basis.

Subject to the Applicants' agreement, the top-ranked Indigenous Applicant will be acknowledged as the NCP Indigenous Fellow and the top-ranked Applicant for each Host Location will be acknowledged as an NCP Fellow. In addition, the Applicant whose proposed program will be conducted in an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) location and most closely aligns with Australia's interest in promoting close cooperation with ASEAN will be acknowledged as the NCP ASEAN Fellow.

DFAT may establish further categories of Fellows at its discretion.

Fellows are encouraged to play a strong leadership role in promoting the NCP while on their Scholarship Program, and as part of the alumni network following completion of their Scholarship Program.

7 How to apply

Before applying, the Applicant must read these Guidelines and the sample Scholarship Agreement which can be found at [GrantConnect](#). Any alterations and addenda¹ will be published on GrantConnect. By registering on GrantConnect, individuals will be automatically notified of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for Australian Government grants information.

7.1 Overview

DFAT will contact individuals nominated by Australian Universities by email and provide instructions on how to submit the Application.

- a. To apply Applicants must:

¹ 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.

- b. complete the online application form available from a link provided to the Applicant by DFAT, accessible via <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>
- c. provide all the information requested
- d. address all Eligibility Requirements and Assessment Criteria
- e. include all necessary attachments, and
- f. submit their Application online through <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/> by the Closing Time.

Each Applicant may only submit one Scholarship Program proposal. Multiple proposals will not be considered. An Applicant cannot change their Primary Location in their Application once it has been submitted.

The Applicant is responsible for ensuring that their Application is complete and accurate. Applicants should note that 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 Program terminated if it is the belief of DFAT that false or misleading information has formed a component of an Application. Further terms relating to the termination or cancellation of a Scholarship are set out in the Scholarship Agreement.

If an Applicant finds an error in their Application after submitting it, they should contact DFAT immediately via email at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au. DFAT does not have to accept any additional information, nor requests to correct an Application after the Closing Time.

If DFAT finds an error or information that is missing, it may seek clarification or additional information from the Applicant that will not change the nature of the Application. However, DFAT can refuse to accept additional information from the Applicant that would change their Application after the Closing Time.

The Applicant should keep a copy of their Application and any supporting documents.

DFAT will acknowledge that it has received the Application via an automatically generated email once the Applicant has submitted their Application on the system.

7.2 Written Applications

The main component of the written Application involves answering questions related to the Assessment Criteria. The Application also requires Applicants to provide details of their proposed Scholarship Program, including the mandatory Study Component, any proposed Internships, Mentorships or Language Training, and the Host Location(s) in which they intend to complete their Scholarship. The Primary Location must be decided at the time of Application.

7.3 Referee reports

Applicants must submit two referee reports with their Application. At least one report must be prepared by an academic referee.

Each referee must:

- a. be able to comment substantively on the Applicant's abilities and experience with respect to the Assessment Criteria, and
- a. hold a position that gives their comments credibility (e.g. a position in the Applicant's Home University, workplace or community).

Applicants should choose their referees carefully, as referees' reports may add considerable value to the assessment of an Application against the Assessment Criteria.

7.4 Attachments to the Application

Applicants must submit the following documentation in addition to a completed Application form:

- a. evidence of Australian citizenship (copy of birth certificate, current Australian passport or 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. the following evidence of affiliation with their proposed Host Institution if applicable, and evidence that the Applicant or their Home University has made preliminary contact with the Host Institution in relation to the proposed Study Component:
 - i. 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:
 - (1) 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 2021 and 15 December 2021, and
 - (2) an email or letter from the Applicant or the Applicant's Home University to the Host Institution indicating the student is in the process of applying for the NCP Scholarship Program and, if successful, would be seeking to undertake a study program at that Host Institution under the relevant exchange place arrangement for Commencement on or between 1 January 2021 and 15 December 2021, or
 - i. if intending to apply for a fee paying place for the Study Component:
 - (1) 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 5.8.2), and
 - (2) an email or letter from the Applicant or the Applicant's Home University to the Host Institution indicating the student is in the process of applying for the NCP Scholarship Program and, if successful, would be seeking to undertake a study program at that Host Institution as a fee-paying student for Commencement on or between 1 January 2021 and 15 December 2021
- e. a letter from the Applicant's Home University faculty, endorsed by the Home University's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships, attesting to the feasibility of the Applicant's proposed Study Component, with reference to the requirements set out in Section 5.2.1.

Applicants must liaise with their Home University's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships or international office to obtain this evidence.

Applicants should only attach requested documents. Information that has not been requested will not be considered.

7.5 Timing of grant opportunity processes

The table below summaries the indicative key dates and steps in the selection process.

DFAT may amend the timeline at any time by posting a notice on GrantConnect.

Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Guidelines published on GrantConnect <https://www.grants.gov.au/>: 19 February 2020

Australian Universities nominate students. Nominations must be made via <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>: 24 June 2020 – 21 July 2020

Nominations close at 11.30pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST): 21 July 2020

Nominated students receive an invitation to complete an online Application. Applicants complete and submit their Application and supporting documentation: 22 July 2020 – 18 August 2020

Applications close at 11.30pm AEST (**'Closing Time'**): 18 August 2020

Applications are shortlisted. Shortlisted Applicants are notified: September 2020

Shortlisted Applicants are interviewed: September – October 2020

Selections are finalised. Minister for Foreign Affairs notified of selection outcomes. All successful and unsuccessful Applicants are notified of the outcome of their Application: November 2020

Scholars are announced and their details published on the NCP website: December 2020

Scholars commence their Scholarship: 1 January 2021 – 15 December 2021

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. The NCP Secretariat will endeavour to respond to questions within three working days. If applicable, answers to questions will be posted on GrantConnect.

The NCP Secretariat will not respond to questions received after **5.00pm (AEST) 11 August 2020**.

8 The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of Applications

DFAT will only accept and consider Applications submitted by the Closing Time. DFAT will not accept late Applications.

DFAT will assess applications as follows:

Stage 1: Initial screening

DFAT (or its agent) will review Applications to ensure that they comply with Eligibility Requirements. Only Applications that meet these requirements will be assessed in Stage 2.

Stage 2: Detailed assessment of written Applications against Assessment Criteria

Eligible Applications are assessed through a competitive process by a panel of assessors who are experienced in assessing Commonwealth grant applications or similar processes managed by Commonwealth government departments. DFAT and/or third party providers may comprise the panel of assessors. All panel members are subject to 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 meets the Assessment Criteria
- b. how it compares to other Applications, and
- c. whether it provides Value with relevant money.

The assessors will provide an order of merit to DFAT.

The NCP Secretariat Delegate (Director of the NCP Secretariat) will determine which Applications are shortlisted for interview on the basis of the order of merit proposed by the assessment panel and other considerations outlined in Section 6.2.

Stage 3: Interviews

Shortlisted Applicants will be advised that they are shortlisted and invited to attend an interview in accordance with the timetable set out in Section 7.5.

Interview panels will comprise members drawn from the following: senior government officials, private sector, experts on Indo-Pacific affairs, and/or the education sector.

Panels will rank each Applicant as Highly Recommended, Recommended or Not Recommended on the basis of the Assessment Criteria and other considerations outlined in Section 6.2. The NCP Secretariat will moderate the panel recommendations and present the findings to the Program Delegate to decide on the award of Scholarships.

8.2 Who will approve the award of Scholarships?

The Program Delegate (the DFAT Deputy Secretary responsible for the NCP Secretariat), or their delegate, will approve the applicants to be awarded Scholarships, taking into account recommendations of the interview panels and the availability of funds.

The Program Delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- a. the approval of the Scholarship
- b. the grant funding amount to be awarded, and
- c. the terms and conditions of the Scholarship.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a Scholarship.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs will be advised of the outcome prior to notification of successful and unsuccessful Applicants.

9 Notification of application outcomes

DFAT will advise Applicants of the outcome of their Application via email. DFAT will advise successful Applicants of any specific conditions attached to the Scholarship.

9.1 Feedback on Applications

There may be several reasons why an Application is not successful. After the conclusion of the round, the most common reasons for why Applications were not successful will be available on the [NCP website](#). Individual feedback will not be provided to unsuccessful Applicants.

Unsuccessful Applicants may apply for any future grant opportunities under the NCP. They should include new and/or additional information to address any weaknesses in an initial Application, noting that this does not guarantee success in a future round.

9.2 Offer and acceptance processes

Offers of a Scholarship are subject to Applicants accepting and signing a Scholarship Agreement and being able to obtain appropriate visa(s) for their Host Location.

10 Successful grant applications

10.1 Scholarship Agreement

A legally binding Scholarship Agreement must be entered into with the Commonwealth before any Scholarship Benefits can be paid to the Scholar or a third party and before the Scholar commences the Scholarship Program.

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 Australian Government's commitment to providing the Scholarship Benefits. The version of the Guidelines in place when the Scholar submitted their Application will apply to their Scholarship Program.

Applicants should ensure they have read the sample Scholarship Agreement before submitting their Application.

The Scholarship Agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate. DFAT will identify these in the Scholarship Agreement.

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

10.2 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 opportunity
- b. increase the duration of the Study Components, 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 by way of a Program Variation Request Form provided by their 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 the Support Services Organisation or by DFAT, in its sole and absolute discretion.

Without limitation, DFAT may consider:

- a. the merits of the request (and funding being available if required) in respect of achieving the Strategic Objective and outcomes
- b. demonstrated coherence across the Study Components, and any Language Training and Internship Components of the Scholarship Program, and
- c. ensuring that the Scholarship Program remains consistent with the Eligibility Requirements.

Scholars will be 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.

10.3 Specific legislation and policies

Scholars are required to comply with all relevant Australian and local laws and regulations, in Australia and in Host Locations once on Scholarship. This includes compliance with laws in relation to child protection and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH).

DFAT has a zero tolerance approach to child exploitation, child abuse, and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. Scholars must comply with DFAT's policies (and the Support Services Organisation's policies) for [Child Protection](#) and [PSEAH](#) which set out expectations in relation to appropriate behaviours and reporting requirements for Scholars.

Scholars should take into account the [University Foreign Interference Taskforce - Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector 2019](#).

10.4 How DFAT pays the grant

The Scholarship Agreement sets out the times and manner in which Scholarship Benefits will be provided to Scholars.

Certain Scholarship Benefits will be paid to the Scholar directly. Other Scholarship Benefits, such as Tuition Fees, will be paid directly to the Host Institution or Language Training Provider, as relevant.

Applicants should refer to the sample Scholarship Agreement for further information.

10.5 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 make public details of individual Scholarships and Scholars, including, but not limited to:

- a. the names of successful Scholars, their Home University, Host Location(s), Host Institution, Host Organisation and Language Training Provider
- b. a brief description of the Scholarship Program being supported (and timing)
- c. the amount of funding awarded, and
- d. photographs of Scholars that are taken at DFAT 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 let DFAT or the Support Services Organisation know if anything is likely to affect their ability to undertake their Scholarship Program, in accordance with the Scholarship Agreement.

12.2 Reporting

Scholars must submit reports in line with the Scholarship Agreement.

12.3 Evaluation

NCP Scholarship Program reporting and evaluation are ongoing activities within the Australian Government. DFAT and the Support Services Organisation 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. Information may also be used by DFAT to create testimonials for NCP promotion.

DFAT and the Support Services Organisation will conduct performance monitoring and management online through <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>. Information about Applicants, Program outcomes and performance (including reports) 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 also expected to participate in ongoing 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.

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

In relation to feedback on Applications, see Section 9.1.

Enquiries and feedback in relation to the processing and selection of Applications should be sent to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

If an Applicant, or any other person, is dissatisfied with the administration of the NCP Scholarship Program, they can raise their concerns with the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman generally prefers that DFAT is given an opportunity to deal with the complaint in the first instance. All complaints must be provided in writing.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone: 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

The Australian Government is not be 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 Further information

For further information on NCP Scholarship Program administrative matters, including eligibility, Applications and funding arrangements, Private Sector Organisation liaison, Internships, Mentorships, public diplomacy and alumni, please contact DFAT at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

13.3 Conflicts of Interest

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. Obligations for the management of Conflicts of Interest by Scholars are set out in the Declaration of Acceptance.

13.4 Privacy

DFAT and their contractors are bound by the provisions of the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Cth) ('**Privacy Act**'), including the Australian Privacy Principles ('**APPs**'), which prescribe rules for the handling of Personal Information.

DFAT collects 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 (e.g. name, gender, date of birth and contact details), academic results and equity information.

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

- a. assess Applications,
- b. administer the NCP, including monitoring performance and following up with Applicants 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 successful Applicants/Scholars to relevant functions and events in Australia or overseas.

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, Skills and Employment,
- 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 Officer for Scholarships,
- f. Scholarship sponsors, including but not limited to companies or professional bodies, and
- g. media representatives, including foreign media representatives.

DFAT may also disclose Personal Information in relation to Applications under the NCP Scholarship Program to overseas recipients, including Host Institutions, potential Internship/Mentorship Host Organisations, Language Training Providers, Host Location

governments/authorities and non-government organisations. By consenting for your personal information to be disclosed to an overseas recipient, you acknowledge that: (a) the overseas recipient will not be accountable under the Privacy Act; and (b) you will not be able to seek redress under the Privacy Act, if the overseas recipient handles your personal information in breach of the Privacy Act.

If you do not consent to DFAT or its contractor(s) collecting, using and disclosing your Personal Information, DFAT may not be able to process your Application for the NCP Scholarship Program.

If you have any concerns about DFAT's collection, use and disclosure of your Personal Information, please contact DFAT's Privacy Team at: privacy@dfat.gov.au.

For more information about DFAT's handling of Personal Information, including how we protect and manage Personal Information, how you can access or correct Personal Information we hold about you, or how you can make a complaint about an alleged privacy breach, please refer to DFAT's Privacy Policy - www.dfat.gov.au/privacy.html

13.5 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 Application and/or Scholarship 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 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 Scholarship Agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

- a. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- b. the information is commercially sensitive, and
- c. 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:

- a. Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the NCP Scholarship Program effectively
- b. employees and contractors of DFAT for the purpose of research, assessment, monitoring and analysing the NCP Scholarship Program
- c. employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- d. 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
- e. other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in NCP Scholarship Program reports and consultations
- f. the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- g. the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, or

h. 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.

13.6 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.

14 Glossary

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent 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

when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes.

Applicant: a person who is applying or has applied for a Scholarship.

Application

an application for a Scholarship under the NCP Scholarship Program.

Assessment Criteria

the specified principles or standards, against which Applications will be judged and are set out in Section 6.

Australian Qualifications Framework

is available at: <https://www.aqf.edu.au/>.

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

undergraduate studies at a Bachelor Level 7 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Bachelor Honours Degree

undergraduate studies at a Bachelor Honours Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Case Manager

a staff member of the Support Services Organisation who is assigned to a particular Scholar and who is responsible for providing the Scholar with information and support services to undertake their Scholarship Program.

Closing Time

the date and time specified as such in the timeline at Section 7.5, beyond which Applications will not be accepted.

Commencement

the date in the Application that the Scholar is required to commence their Scholarship Program.

Commonwealth Grant 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 three 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

refers to 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.

Declaration of Acceptance

is provided online via: <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>.

Disability: refers to 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 requirements for:

- a. a Scholarship Program to be eligible for the NCP Scholarship Program as described in Section 5.1, and
- b. an Applicant to be eligible for the NCP Scholarship Program as described in Section 4.1.

Establishment Allowance

has the meaning in Section 1.b.

Fellow

has the meaning in Section 6.3.

Fellows Allowance

has the meaning in Section 1.b.

Full Time

for each of the Study Component, Internship Component and Language Training the requirements set out in the Eligibility Requirements.

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).

Graduate Certificate

Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Graduate Diploma

Level 8 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

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:

- a. under which relevant money² or other [Consolidated Revenue Fund](#) (CRF) money³ 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 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 PBS Program.

[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.

Guidelines

these NCP Scholarship Program guidelines, as amended from time to time.

Home University

the Australian University in which an Applicant or Scholar (as the case requires) is enrolled while Applying for or undertaking their Scholarship Program and will confer the student's degree upon completion.

Host Institution

a university or other education provider in which the Scholar undertakes their Study Component in the Host Location.

Host Location

the eligible geographic location in the Indo-Pacific region set out in Section 5.5 to which the Scholar will travel to undertake their Scholarship Program.

Host Organisation

the organisation in which the Scholar undertakes an Internship or Mentorship in the Host Location.

Insurance

has the meaning in Section 5.8.4.

Internship

² Relevant money is defined in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* ('**PGPA Act**'). See section 8, Dictionary.

³ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

a professional work experience in which a Scholar has learning goals relevant to their academic qualification and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies.

Internship Component

an Internship to be undertaken as part of a Scholarship Program that meets the Eligibility Requirements in Section 5.3.1.

Language Training

training in a language to be undertaken as part of a Scholarship Program that meets the Eligibility Requirements in Section 5.4.

Language Training Provider: a provider of language training at which the Scholar undertakes their 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 (SEIFA) Index of Education and Occupation (IEO) measured at Statistical Area 1 (SA1) level.

Mental Health Allowance

has the meaning in Section 1.d.

Mental Health Service

professional counselling to foster a state of well-being, in which the Scholar realises his or her 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 helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person, relevant to work, career, or professional development.

New Colombo Plan (NCP)

the NCP Scholarship Program and the NCP Mobility Program.

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Liaison Officer for Scholarships

the person(s) designated by each Australian University to submit student nominations and receive Program updates.

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program

the program of that name administered by DFAT.

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program

has the meaning in Section 1.1.

New Colombo Plan Website

www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan

Outcome

has the meaning in Section 2.

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

has the meaning in Section 5.6.

Personal Information

has 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 Location

has 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 New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program.

Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation is the provision of support, modifications and/or adjustments that meet the individual needs of Scholars with disabilities to enable their participation in the New Colombo Plan on an equal basis with all other Scholars.

Regional/Remote

a region designated as Regional or Remote by the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).

Scholar

a successful Applicant who receives a Scholarship.

Scholarship

a scholarship under the NCP Scholarship Program, and includes the relevant Scholarship Benefits provided to the Scholar under the NCP Scholarship Program.

Scholarship Agreement

the agreement to be entered into between the Commonwealth and the Scholar prior to the start of the Scholarship Program, in substantially the form of the example provided on the New Colombo Plan Website.

Scholarship Allowance

has the meaning in Section 5.8.3c.

Scholarship Benefits

the Travel Allowance, the Establishment Allowance, the Fellows Allowance (if applicable), the Scholarship Allowance, the Tuition Fees (if applicable), the Mental Health Allowance and the Insurance as described in Section 5.8 or any part thereof, 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 10.2). The duration of the Scholarship Program is the Scholarship Term.

Scholarship Program Completion Date

is the date in the Application by which the Scholar is required to complete the Scholarship Program or such other later date in accordance with the Scholarship Agreement.

Scholarship Term

the term of a Scholarship Program starting from Commencement and ending on the Scholarship Program Completion Date.

Secondary Location

has 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 direct to the Scholars, such as training opportunities.

Strategic Objective

has 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.

Support Services Organisation

a third party provider(s) contracted by the Commonwealth of Australia to manage support services for Scholars or provide other services in relation to the NCP Scholarship Program.

Travel Allowance

has the meaning in Section 1.a.

Tuition Fees

the monetary contribution available towards a Scholar's tuition fees for a Study Component and Language Training (if any) as set out in Section 5.8.2.

Value with money

value with money in this document 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.

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.