



# New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program

## Guide to Referee Reports in New Colombo Plan Online

### (for Applicants and referees)

This guide aims to provide further information for Applicants, referees and Australian Universities regarding the referee report process for the New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program using the online application system 'New Colombo Plan Online'.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the NCP Scholarship Program Guidelines and Advice for Applicants available on [GrantConnect](#). It should also be read in conjunction with the Scholarship Application Guide, provided to all applicants and Australian Universities to provide guidance on using the NCP Online system to prepare and submit an application form, including referee reports (section 11 of the application form).

All capitalised terms used in this document have the meaning provided in the NCP Scholarship Program Guidelines. The NCP Scholarship Program Guidelines take priority to the extent of any inconsistency with this guide.

As part of an Application, **each Applicant is required to obtain two referee reports**, to be supplied as part of their application before the application closing date: **11.30pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 23 September 2025**. An application cannot be submitted without the referee reports.

Referee reports must be uploaded directly to NCP Online by referees, following the steps described in this document. Referee reports cannot be submitted by email or any other alternative method to that set out in this document.

When choosing a suitable referee, or before agreeing to be a referee, please note that a referee must be able to comment substantially on the applicant's abilities and experience with respect to the Assessment Criteria as set out in the 2026 Scholarship Program Guidelines, and must hold a position that gives their comments credibility (e.g. a position in the Applicant's university, workplace or community). At least **one** report must be prepared by an academic referee.

Screenshots of relevant sections of the NCP Online system contained in this guide may refer to information and dates from previous rounds. These are included as examples only and do not indicate dates for the NCP 2026 Scholarship Round.

If you experience any technical issues using the referee report functionality or have any questions, please contact the NCP Secretariat at [ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au](mailto:ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au).

### Application Form Functionality

The referee report process begins as each Applicant is completing their Application Form. Under *Section 11: Referee Details* of the Application Form, Applicants have the ability to add referees, which will automatically send, using the supplied email address, a link to the referee to complete the report.

**Application ID: 252267** **Draft**

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Applicant details
- 3. Citizenship and residency ✓
- 4. Current academic details
- 5. Host locations and duration ✓
- 6. Study component
- 7. Internship / mentorship
- 8. In-country language training
- 9. Proposed program
- 10. Assessment criteria
- 11. Referee details**
- 12. Award history

**11. Referee details**

As part of your application you are required to obtain two referee reports (including one from an academic referee). These must be completed by your referees before you can submit your application. A referee must be able to comment substantively on the applicant's abilities and experience with respect to the assessment criteria, and must hold a position that gives their comments credibility (e.g. a position in the applicant's university, workplace or community). At least one report must be prepared by an academic referee

Applicants should consider carefully their referees, as their reports may add considerable value to an application through the assessment process.

If you need to change the details of a referee remove the referee and add them again.

You have not yet entered any referees.

**Add referee**

◀ Previous   Next ▶

View as printable PDF **Submit**

To begin the process, Applicants should select the blue 'Add referee' button under Section 11.

**Add referee**

◀ Previous   Next ▶

Applicants can then enter the details of their referees and designate each referee as either an academic or non-academic referee. Each Applicant must have at least **one** academic referee in order to submit their Application.

**Referee details** ✕

You must complete fields with a \*

\* First name:

\* Last name:

\* Email address:

\* Confirm email address:

\* Is this an academic referee? ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Save** **Cancel**

Once the Applicant has entered the referee details and selected the 'Save' button, they will receive the notification below advising that the referee will receive an email inviting them to complete a referee report and asking the Applicant to confirm they want to do this.

The screenshot shows a 'Referee details' form with a modal dialog titled 'Add referee'. The dialog contains the text: 'Adding a referee will send an email inviting them to complete a referee report. Are you sure you want to add this referee?'. There are 'OK' and 'Cancel' buttons at the bottom of the dialog. The background form has fields for 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Email address', 'Confirm email address', and a radio button for 'Is this an academic referee?' (selected 'Yes'). There are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons at the bottom right of the form.

Selecting 'OK' will send the referee report to the referee. The status of the referee will appear as 'Request sent'.

The screenshot shows the 'Referee details' form with the status 'Request sent' displayed. The form includes fields for 'Referee First Name', 'Referee Last Name', 'Request sent' (07 August 2025 01:23 PM), 'Email address' (first.referee@test.com), and 'Is this an academic referee?' (Yes). There are 'Remove', 'Resend', and 'Edit' buttons at the top right.

If the Applicant needs to change one of their referees, a referee request can be cancelled using the 'Remove' button.

If a referee has not received the referee request email, the Applicant can resend it using the 'Resend' button.

If the Applicant has mistakenly designated the referee as the wrong type (i.e. academic or non-academic), this can be changed using the 'Edit' button functionality.

The screenshot shows the 'Referee details' form with the 'First Referee' section. It includes the 'Email address' (first.referee@test.com) and the 'Is this an academic referee?' radio button (selected 'Yes'). A blue box contains the text: 'To change a referee's name or email address they must first be removed and then added again with the updated details.' There are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons at the bottom right.

However, if an incorrect email address or name has been entered, the Applicant must create a new referee by removing and re-adding them using their correct details.

Please note that a referee may also edit their name through the referee report. If this occurs, the Applicant will be notified via email to ensure the report is completed by the intended referee.


*Dear Applicant*

*Your referee for your 2036 New Colombo Plan Scholarship application updated their name details from First Referee to Initial Referee.*

*Kind regards*

*New Colombo Plan Scholarships Team*

Once the referee has completed their report, the Applicant will be advised via email and the status of the report in the Application will change to 'Complete'.

Referee First Name	Referee Last Name	Complete	Remove 
<p><b>Request sent:</b> 07 August 2025 01:23 PM</p> <p><b>Email address:</b> first.referee@test.com</p> <p><b>Is this an academic referee?</b> Yes</p>			

[Add referee](#)

## Referee Report Functionality

The referee will receive an email notifying them that the applicant has requested they provide a referee report for their NCP scholarship application. This will contain instructions on how to access NCP Online, including log-in details and a pass key. Once the referee has entered the pass key contained in their referee email, they will be logged in to their report. **The Applicant will not be able to view the referee report.** The report will be returned directly to the Department once it has been completed.

It is not necessary to complete the entire referee report in one session. The report will be saved each time the referee saves a completed section, allowing the referee to continue later.

## Referee report - Miss Test Two

Miss Test Two of Australian University is applying for a New Colombo Plan Scholarship and has requested that this referee report be sent to you.

The type of referee report requested is: Academic

Please note that the applicant will not be able to view this referee report. You can return to your referee report later using the link and the pass-key provided in the invitation email.

If you do not wish to provide a referee report, please select the decline button below. The applicant will be advised that the report request has been declined.

Referee details	Edit
<p><b>Name:</b> First Referee</p> <p><b>Email address:</b> first.referee@test.com</p> <p><b>Position held:</b> Not specified</p> <p><b>Institution / organisation:</b> Not specified</p> <p><b>Phone:</b> Not specified</p>	
Nature and length of relationship	Edit
<p><b>Relationship to applicant:</b> Not specified</p> <p><b>Length of relationship:</b> Not specified</p>	

If the referee does not wish to provide a referee report, the request can be declined using the red 'Decline to offer referee report' button at the bottom of the report. If declining a request to be a referee, please do so as soon as practicable. The Applicant will be advised via email that the request has been declined and can add a new referee in their Application after removing the old referee.

<div>Decline to offer referee report</div> <div>Submit referee report</div>
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The referee is first requested to provide their personal information and the contact details in case further information is required during the Application assessment process. NOTE: If a referee is not willing to provide this information, they cannot be a referee.

The referee may also edit their name. If this occurs the Applicant will be notified via email to ensure the report is completed by the intended referee.

Referee details

You must complete fields with a \*

\* Title:

\* First name: First

\* Last name: Referee

Email address: first.referee@test.com

\* Position held:

\* Institution / organisation:

\* Phone:

Save Cancel

The referee must also provide details of the nature and length of their relationship to the Applicant.

Nature and length of relationship

You must complete fields with a \*

\* Relationship to applicant:

\* Length of relationship:
years,
months

Save Cancel

The referee is then asked to assess the Applicant against the same Selection Criteria specified in the NCP Scholarship Program Guidelines.

Criterion 1
Edit

**Alignment of application with the Australian Government's geographic and sectoral priorities in the Indo-Pacific region**  
Weighting: 35%  
You should demonstrate this by:

- describing how your scholarship program aligns with and will contribute to Australian government priorities, demonstrating a well-researched, cohesive scholarship program, and
- describing the linkages (personal and institutional) that you will develop while undertaking your NCP Scholarship, building on your demonstrated interest in, and knowledge of, the Indo-Pacific.

**Rating:** Not specified

**Comments:** Not specified

Referees may enter their rating and comments by selecting the 'Edit' button for each Selection Criterion. Comments are limited to 300 words.

Referees should give the Applicant a rating between A-E for each Section Criterion. However, if a referee feels they are unable to assess the Applicant in relation to a particular Selection Criterion, they have the option of selecting 'NA', as Not Assessed. Referees should still leave a comment as to why they have selected NA, rather than leaving the comment box empty.

**Criterion 1: Alignment of application with the Australian Government's geographic and sectoral priorities in the Indo-Pacific region** ✕  
**Weighting: 35%**

You should demonstrate this by:

- describing how your scholarship program aligns with and will contribute to Australian government priorities, demonstrating a well-researched, cohesive scholarship program, and
- describing the linkages (personal and institutional) that you will develop while undertaking your NCP Scholarship, building on your demonstrated interest in, and knowledge of, the Indo-Pacific.

You must complete fields with a \*

**\* Rating:**

☐ A - Highly meets criterion   ☐ B - Comfortably meets the criterion   ☐ C - Satisfactorily meets criterion  
☐ D - Marginally meets criterion   ☐ E - Fails to meet criterion   ☐ NA

[Rating descriptions \(link opens new window\)](#)

**\* Comments:**

0 / 300 words

Save

Cancel

Once the referee has entered the ratings and comments for all four Section Criteria, the referee is to submit the report by selecting the green 'Submit referee report' button at the bottom of the referee report form.

Decline to offer referee report

Submit referee report

Referees will then be presented with the Referee privacy notice, which outlines the New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program's privacy policy regarding referees' personal information. Once the referee indicates they have read and understood the privacy notice by ticking the box, they can submit the referee report using the blue 'Submit' button. A completion notice will be sent to the Applicant to advise that the referee report has been completed.



## Referee report submitted – New Colombo Plan

Thank you for submitting your referee report. A copy will be sent to you shortly.



