



NCP Mobility Program

Principles for virtual delivery of mobility projects

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on international travel, Australian students are temporarily unable to conduct their programs physically situated in Indo-Pacific locations.

Until travel restrictions are lifted and the welfare of NCP students on programs can be appropriately managed, we propose to permit online delivery of elements of the NCP. This would include mobility projects and internships, where these virtual study and work-based experiences are supported by strong relationships with Indo-Pacific institutions and private sector organisations.

The virtual (online) delivery of international experiences will maintain the momentum of the NCP, building and reinforcing people-to-people, institutional and business linkages between Australia and the Indo-Pacific region. It will encourage increased diversity and participation by students for whom international travel presents challenges.

Government has approved this shift from the approach outlined in the NCP mobility guidelines as a temporary COVID-19 response. We anticipate this virtual mobility model will continue for a period of approximately 18 months. The NCP will revert to normal arrangements as soon as it is possible to do so, when travel to NCP host locations can be resumed and student safety and welfare can be appropriately met. We will review the outcomes of online delivery of projects at this time. The review will inform future delivery arrangements, noting, however, that immersive, in-country experiences are a hallmark of the NCP.

Parameters for virtual delivery

Australian universities are encouraged, where possible, to look at innovative ways to deliver their current NCP mobility projects to provide virtual experiential learning for students. These may include (but are not limited to) the following program types:

- Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) with partner institutions, which will see Australian students work with cohorts of students and staff from the Indo-Pacific institutions;
- Online International Learning (OIL) experiences – such as exchange-based online learning with partners (summer schools etc);
- Faculty led programs – which are moderated by a faculty lead with their partners and organisations in the region;
- Internships and practicums with off-shore Indo-Pacific organisations, which will enable students to expand their communication, team work and problem-solving skills as they work across cultures, time-zones and languages;
- Work Integrated Learning (WIL) experiences developed to enable students' collaboration in solving real-life business problems, working with partner corporations in the Indo-Pacific.

The shift away from in-country experiences should not diminish the quality and impact of mobility projects. Students should continue to establish life-long connections in the Indo-Pacific, deepen their



understanding of foreign cultures and increase their future employability as graduates with genuine global experience.

A student may participate in a virtual NCP Mobility project **in addition** to receiving one short term and one semester length in-country NCP mobility project (as outlined in the NCP mobility program guidelines).

Universities should encourage students from diverse backgrounds to participate in virtual mobility programs noting that such online opportunities could improve accessibility for students who have work, family, and carer, cultural or other commitments; or whose capacity to travel is affected by disability or health issues.

Mobility grants

Consistent with current NCP mobility guidelines, students participating in an NCP mobility project must receive the same amount of funding. However, to allow more students to participate in a project, a university may provide smaller grants to a larger number of students in a particular online project up to the approved grant amount. Given that the costs of running mobility projects online are lower than those that include international travel and accommodation, we anticipate that universities may be able to extend mobility grants for online programs to a larger number of students.

For NCP short-term projects, one virtual program type may be made available under each project e.g. COIL, OIL, internship, practicum etc. For NCP semester projects, universities may offer two or more virtual program types e.g. semester exchange, an internship and language training etc. However, the proposal in the variation request would need to be clearly described and costs justified.

Mobility grants may be used to support language training delivered virtually in the host location by an accredited language school.

Mobility grants may be used to support the costs directly associated with virtual experience, such as special events in the host location for student/institutional interaction or third party provider costs associated with internships or delivery of a virtual mobility project.

For any costs not directly associated with the delivery of the virtual experience, universities may use administration funding provided under the NCP mobility program and should not use student mobility grants. (This might include, for example, the provision of IT equipment or generic onshore cultural competency programs at the home university).

Internships

Universities may wish to source potential internship opportunities for mobility program students via the NCP Internship and Mentorship Network <https://ncpbusiness.dfat.gov.au>