



Australian Government



NEW COLOMBO PLAN

Connect to Australia's future - study in the region

New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2023 Round Guidelines

University nominations open:	22 June 2022
University nominations close:	11.30 pm AEST on 19 July 2022
Student applications open:	20 July 2022
Student applications close:	11.30 pm AEST on 16 August 2022
Commonwealth policy and administering entity:	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au . Questions should be sent no later than 2 August 2022.
Guidelines released:	28 March 2022
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted or restricted competitive

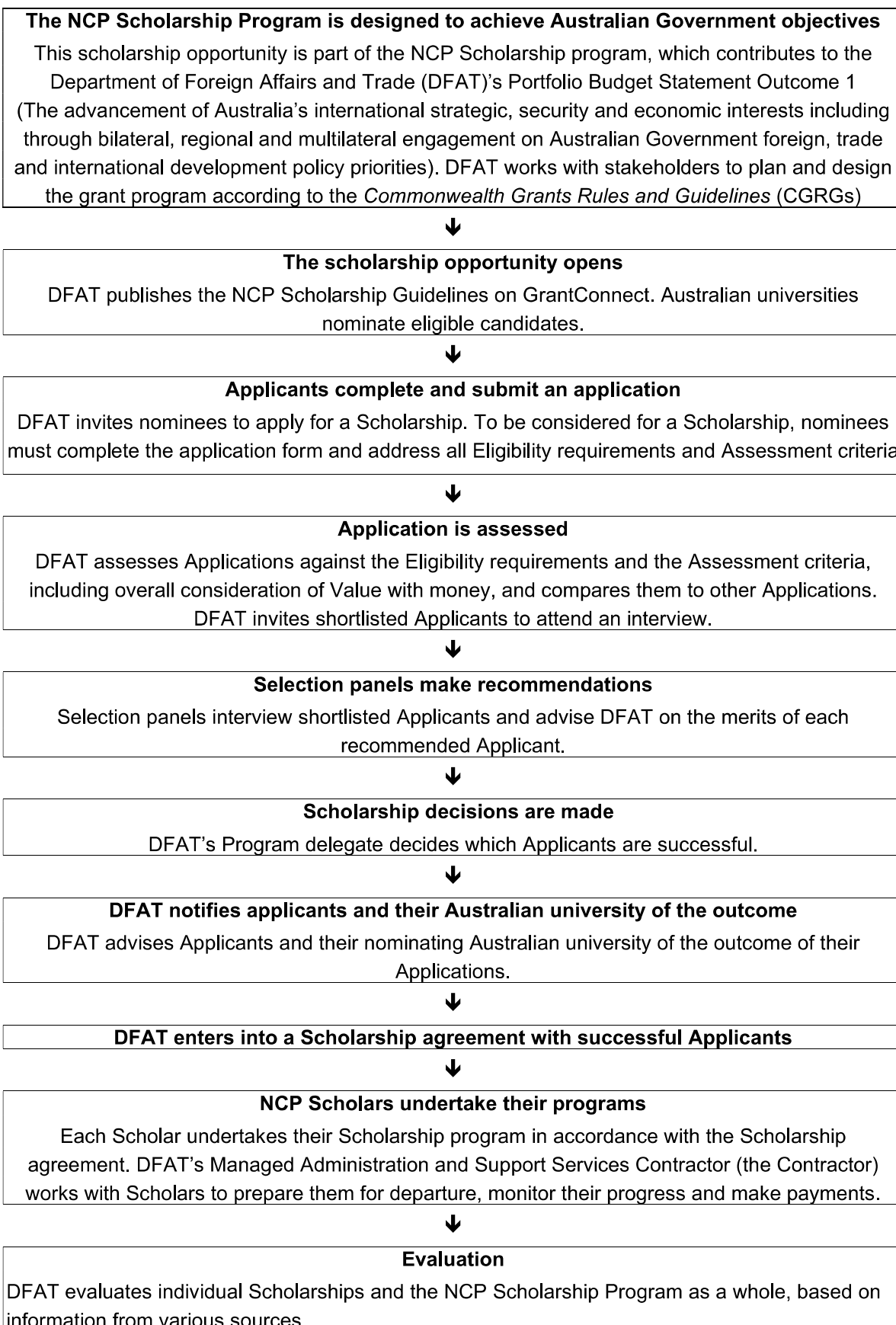
Contents

New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2023 Round Guidelines	1
1. New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program: 2023 Round processes	5
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. NCP Funding	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 Managed Administration and Support Services Contractor	9
3. Grant amount and grant period	9
3.1. NCP funding commitment.....	9
3.2. Grant period	9
4. Eligibility requirements	10
4.1. Who is eligible to apply for a scholarship?.....	10
4.2. Nominations	10
5. What the grant money can be used for	11
5.1. Eligible scholarship program activities.....	11
5.2. Study component.....	12
5.2.1. General	12
5.2.2. Host institution	12
5.3. Internship and mentorship	12
5.3.1. Internship component	13
5.3.2. Mentorship	13
5.4. Language training	13
5.5. Eligible locations	14
5.5.1. Host locations	14
5.5.2. Primary locations	14
5.5.3. Secondary locations	14
5.5.4. Travel requirements	14
5.6. Permitted gaps.....	15
5.7. Community engagement and advocacy	16
5.8. Scholarship benefits.....	16
5.8.1. Overview	16
5.8.2. Tuition fees	17

5.8.3.	Allowances.....	19
5.8.4.	Other scholarship benefits.....	19
5.8.4.1	Insurance	19
5.8.4.2	Allocation of case manager	19
5.8.4.3	Private sector sponsorship	19
6.	The assessment criteria	20
6.1.	Assessment criteria.....	20
6.1.1.	Academic excellence at the tertiary level (25 per cent weighting).....	20
6.1.2.	Leadership and engagement in the community (25 per cent weighting).....	20
6.1.3.	Adaptability and resilience (25 per cent weighting).....	20
6.1.4.	Ability to contribute to NCP's strategic objective and outcomes (25 per cent weighting).....	20
6.2.	Other considerations.....	20
6.3.	Selection of fellows.....	21
7.	How to apply	21
7.1.	Overview.....	21
7.2.	Written applications.....	22
7.3.	Referee reports.....	22
7.4.	Attachments to the application.....	22
7.5.	Timing of grant opportunity processes.....	23
7.6.	Questions during the application process.....	24
8.	The grant selection process	24
8.1.	Assessment of applications.....	24
8.2.	Who will approve the award of scholarships?.....	25
9.	Notification of application outcomes	25
9.1.	Feedback on applications.....	25
9.2.	Offer and acceptance processes.....	25
10.	Successful grant applications	25
10.1.	Scholarship agreement.....	25
10.2.	Variations to scholarship programs.....	26
10.3.	Specific legislation and policies.....	26
10.4.	How DFAT pays the grant.....	27
10.5.	Taxation.....	27
11.	Announcement of grants	27
12.	How DFAT monitors grant activity	27
12.1.	Keeping DFAT informed.....	27
12.2.	Reporting.....	27
12.3.	Evaluation.....	27
13.	Probity	28
13.1.	Enquiries and feedback.....	28

13.2.	Conflicts of interest	28
13.3.	Privacy	29
13.4.	Confidential information	30
13.5.	Freedom of information.....	30
14.	Glossary.....	31

1. New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program: 2023 Round processes



1.1. Introduction

These guidelines provide information about the 2023 round of the NCP Scholarship Program, including Eligibility requirements and processes for selecting scholarship recipients.

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

These guidelines set out:

- the NCP strategic objective and outcomes
- the Eligibility requirements and Assessment criteria
- how Applications are selected
- how successful Applicants are notified
- how Scholars are supported, including payments and advice
- how evaluation of the NCP Scholarship Program may be conducted, and
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

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

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 study programs: Scholarships (for study up to 19 months) and mobility grants (for shorter periods of study). Both programs include internships, mentorships and language training. The NCP also includes the NCP Alumni program, which is open to all NCP Scholarship and mobility students on completion of their award and supports alumni to maintain a connection to each other, the NCP and the Indo-Pacific region as they progress in their lives and careers.

The strategic objective of the NCP is to strengthen Australia's regional standing by building a diverse cohort of Australian alumni with deeper Indo-Pacific knowledge, capability and connections.

The intended outcomes of the NCP are:

- increased number and diversity of Australian university undergraduates with Indo-Pacific capability
- deeper people-to-people and institutional relationships between Australia and the Indo-Pacific, and
- students and alumni connected with leaders in government, business and civil society in the Indo-Pacific.

2.2. About the NCP Scholarship Program

The NCP Scholarship Program offers around 120 scholarships annually to a diverse cohort of Australian undergraduates studying a variety of disciplines in up to 40 Indo-Pacific locations. Scholars undertake offshore programs including study, language training and internship and/or mentorship for up to 19 months.

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

Due to pandemic travel restrictions, NCP Scholars' programs may not be able to proceed in some Indo-Pacific locations as proposed. Variations to approved programs will be considered in such cases (see section 10.2).

2.3. NCP Funding

A total of \$45.087 million is available in NCP funding for the 2022-23 financial year. This funding covers all aspects of NCP administration, including the Scholarship Program and the Mobility Program.

2.4. Roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government

The NCP Secretariat within DFAT is responsible for strategic leadership, policy, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, business liaison and public diplomacy for the NCP program.

DFAT has contracted a Managed Administration and Support Services Contractor (the Contractor) to deliver administration and support services throughout the NCP Scholarship life-cycle, including during the application period, while scholars are on award and when they transition to the NCP Alumni Program.

DFAT, with the assistance of the Contractor, manages the Application and selection processes of the NCP Scholarship Program. Staff from DFAT, the Contractor and others involved in NCP selection have appropriate skills and experience to assess Applications. All personnel are subject to the CGRGs and are required to declare any conflict of interest.

DFAT is not responsible for arranging study components, Internships, Mentorships, Language training and travel arrangements (including visas and accommodation). Scholars, in consultation with their respective Home universities, Host institutions, Host organisations and/or Language training providers, and their individual Case managers (from the Contractor), are responsible for planning and carrying out their approved Scholarship program.

2.5. Roles and responsibilities of Australian universities

Each nominating Australian university

- nominates an NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships (and an alternate contact, where possible) who will submit nominations on behalf of the Australian university and receive updates during 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 for them to be contacted by DFAT.
- may nominate up to ten students to apply for the 2023 round of the NCP Scholarship Program.
- must obtain the consent of each nominee to their personal details being provided to DFAT as part of the nomination process.
- must ensure the email addresses provided for nominees are up-to-date and accurate.
- must confirm that each Applicant's proposed study components are credit-bearing.
- should assist Applicants to obtain evidence of acceptance by their Host institution and should support them to arrange Internships, Mentorships and Language training.

- must work with their Applicants to undertake risk assessments of Host locations proposed by Applicants (see Section 5.5.4). The Australian university must also work with Scholars to undertake risk assessments of any new host locations proposed by scholars during their program.

The Australian university must approve any Internship placements proposed by Applicants.

Australian public universities have an obligation under the Foreign Arrangements Scheme when entering into arrangements with foreign entities, including certain foreign universities. Universities must comply with these obligations in relation to NCP Scholarship programs. Information about the Foreign Arrangements Scheme is available at <https://www.foreignarrangements.gov.au/>

The Contractor may contact and request the assistance of NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships when required.

2.6. Roles and responsibilities of Applicants

Each Applicant:

- must ensure their Application is complete, including supporting documentation and referee reports, and is submitted by the Closing date/time
- must meet any costs associated with preparing and lodging their Application
- is responsible for the decision to apply for and, if successful, to accept a Scholarship. The Australian Government will not be liable for any loss, damage, injury or harm that might be suffered during, or in connection with, the Scholarship program
- must make their own enquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel, including travel to host location(s), and be fully informed about the risks at all times
- must read carefully the travel advice for their host location(s) and other relevant pages on the Smartraveller website for information about risks overseas and preparing for overseas travel
- must not travel to a Host location or region within a Host location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller advice recommends 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel', as outlined in section 5.5 (below)
- must exhibit professional behaviour throughout the selection process

Each Scholar:

- must subscribe to the relevant travel advisories on Smartraveller prior to commencement of their Scholarship
- must obtain and comply with the appropriate visa/s for the duration of their Scholarship
- must not travel to a Host location or region within a Host location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller advice recommends 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel', as outlined in section 5.5 (below)
- must register on any crisis page on the Smartraveller website related to their Host location that is activated during a major overseas incident during their Program
- must comply with their Scholarship Agreement and its incorporated documents such as the NCP Student Code of Conduct, during their Scholarship program. Evidence of unprofessional behaviour, including but not limited to, misrepresentation of the truth in an Application or at interview, or inappropriate social media posts or public commentary referencing the NCP Scholarship Program can be grounds for not awarding or for

cancelling a Scholarship (See *NCP Scholarship Agreement*, *NCP Media and Publication Guidelines*, and *NCP Student Code of Conduct*)

- must cooperate with, and comply with directions given by, DFAT and the Contractor.

2.7. Roles and responsibilities of the Managed Administration and Support Services Contractor

The Contractor is the first point of contact for Applicants and Australian universities on administrative matters, including eligibility for the NCP Scholarship Program, nominations, applications and candidate interviews.

The Contractor allocates a Case manager, and provides advice, assistance and program management, for each scholar. These services include, but are not limited to:

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

The Contractor will undertake regular monitoring and effective communication with DFAT, Australian universities, host institutions and other agencies to minimise the risks associated with the NCP Scholarship Program through an assurance program where all Scholar risk assessments are reviewed to ascertain if they are fit for purpose. The Contractor will manage scholar incidents in conjunction with Home and Host universities, DFAT and emergency services. The Contractor will work with Home University ILOs if and where required.

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1. NCP funding commitment

Funding for the NCP supports:

- a. a Scholarship program for up to 19 months of study, language training, internships and/or mentorships, and
- b. a Mobility program for shorter periods of study (up to semester length), language training, internships, mentorships and research. See NCP Mobility Guidelines for further detail on this program.

Detailed information regarding scholarship benefits is in Section 5.8.

3.2. Scholarship Grant period

The term of an Applicant's proposed Scholarship program must:

- a. have a duration between three and 19 months, and
 - b. commence on or between 1 January 2023 and 15 December 2023;
- unless otherwise approved by DFAT.

4. Eligibility requirements

DFAT will only consider Applications that satisfy all Eligibility requirements.

4.1. Who is eligible to apply for a Scholarship?

To be eligible for a Scholarship, and to remain eligible during their Scholarship program, an Applicant must:

- a. be nominated for the NCP Scholarship Program by their Home university (see Section 4.2)
- b. be an Australian citizen
- c. not be a current citizen or permanent resident of their proposed host location(s)
- d. be enrolled in and undertaking, until completion of all study components of the NCP Scholarship Program, at least one Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree at an Australian campus of an Australian university. (If a Scholar concludes their home degree requirements upon the completion of the mandatory study component of their NCP Scholarship Program, they may apply to DFAT for approval to continue to undertake any remaining component(s) of their NCP Scholarship Program. This will be considered on a case by case basis.)
- e. be between 18 and 30 years of age (inclusive) for non-Indigenous applicants, or between 18 and 35 years of age (inclusive) for Indigenous applicants, on 1 January 2023
- 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 an NCP Scholarship, and
- h. not be an employee of the branch of DFAT that administers the NCP

Scholars must continue to meet these Eligibility requirements during the term of their Scholarship

Unless otherwise approved by DFAT, Scholars may not commence another offshore scholarship or mobility grant while undertaking their Scholarship program.

4.2. Nominations

Only students nominated by their Home university can apply for a Scholarship. Students interested in applying for a Scholarship should contact the [NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships](#) or the international office of their Home university.

Each Australian university may nominate up to ten students enrolled at that university, without ranking them. Each Australian university determines its own process for selecting nominees but should consider the Eligibility requirements and Assessment criteria.

DFAT strongly encourages Australian universities to ensure their nominees are representative of the diversity of the Australian undergraduate population. DFAT will consider reasonable accommodation to facilitate participation of undergraduates living with disability.

Australian universities must submit nominations online through the NCP Online system. DFAT will provide the Australian university NCP Liaison Officers for Scholarships with instructions to access the online platform and submit nominations.

Eligible nominated students will be invited to submit an application. Applicants should be aware that the following details will be requested from their Home university in the online nomination:

- 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 the nominated student consents to a police check being arranged by the Contractor.

Each participating Australian university is responsible for ensuring that it has appropriate policies in place relating to handling of personal information and has obtained each applicant's express consent to deal with and provide their personal information to DFAT.

Each Applicant is required to agree to the terms of use of such personal information (Section 13.4) when submitting their Application.

The Contractor will arrange for a police check for each Applicant. The Australian Government expects NCP Scholars to enhance the reputation of Australia and the NCP whilst overseas. An adverse finding will not automatically disqualify an Applicant from receiving a Scholarship. However, if a successful Applicant is found to have a criminal record or conviction, including one that was not disclosed prior to the offer being made, DFAT may revoke or decline to offer a Scholarship to the Applicant.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1. Eligible Scholarship program activities

To be eligible, an Applicant's proposed Scholarship program must (unless otherwise approved by DFAT):

- a. include at least one Study component commencing within three months of the Scholarship program commencement date. All Study components must be confirmed by the Host institution prior to Program commencement
- b. be for a Scholarship term:
 - i. of between three and 19 months in duration, and
 - ii. commence on or between 1 January 2023 and 15 December 2023, 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, Scholarship programs may include:

- a. an Internship component (see Section 5.3) undertaken concurrently with a Study component or Language training

- b. a Mentorship (see Section 5.3) undertaken concurrently with a Study component, full-time Internship component or full-time Language training, or
- c. Language training (see Section 5.4) undertaken concurrently with a Study component or Internship component.

5.2. Study component

5.2.1. General

To satisfy the mandatory study component of a Scholarship program, a course of study must:

- a. be at least one full-time study 'period', which is either a semester or trimester as defined by the host institution
- b. except via a research-based 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 should in their application describe the benefits of undertaking their research program at their proposed host location).

Scholarship programs may include up to one academic year of Study components. Each study period as part of the academic year is regarded as a separate Study component.

When there is a period between the end of one Study component and the commencement of the next Study component, and a Scholar is not undertaking a full-time Internship or full-time Language training, the Scholar must apply (and have obtained approval) for a Permitted gap covering that period.

5.2.2. Host institution

Study components must not be undertaken at an offshore campus of an Australian university or a university established or headquartered outside the Host location. In exceptional circumstances, DFAT may waive this requirement where the Scholar is able to establish that there is a demonstrated benefit to the overall NCP Scholarship Program.

5.3. Internship and mentorship

DFAT strongly encourages Applicants to include one or more Internships or Mentorships in their proposed Scholarship program, where Host location visa requirements permit.

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

Scholars will be able to access the NCP Internship and Mentorship Network to identify Internship and Mentorship opportunities. Internships and Mentorships do not have to be arranged through the network. Prospective Internship or Mentorship placements, and Host organisations that a Scholar includes in their proposed Scholarship program are subject to due diligence and a risk review to ensure alignment with relevant DFAT policies.

5.3.1. Internship component

Internships enable scholars to have immersive work experiences relevant to their academic course and professional development. Internships can include (but are not limited to) clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies.

An Internship component as part of an NCP Scholarship program must be undertaken:

- a. on a full-time basis (between 22 and 38 hours per week) prior or subsequent to a Study component (subject to Section 5.1(a)) (The minimum duration of any full-time Internship placement is one week. The total cumulative duration of all full-time Internships undertaken during a Scholarship program must not exceed six months), or
- b. on a part-time basis, concurrent with a Study component or a full-time Language training component (there is no maximum duration), and
- c. in the Primary location, or in a Secondary location, in accordance with Section 5.5.

Unless otherwise approved by DFAT, an internship must be undertaken face-to-face at the premises of the host organisation, or elsewhere in the host location where the host organisation conducts regular business. An internship may not be undertaken online or remotely.

An Internship may be paid or unpaid. An internship must not incur any cost to the scholar, their Home university or their Host university, such as for training, program materials or delivery or staff wages. Attending informal or formal paid courses does not count as an Internship.

A scholar who is currently employed with an organisation must not undertake an internship with that organisation as part of their NCP program (whether the internship is paid or unpaid).

5.3.2. Mentorship

A Mentorship is a developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person guides a less experienced or less knowledgeable person, relevant to work, career, or professional development. Mentorships may only be undertaken concurrently with a Study component, full-time Internship component, or full-time Language training.

A Mentorship is negotiated between the Scholar and mentor and can be undertaken face-to-face or via remote methods. There is no minimum time commitment for a Mentorship.

5.4. Language training

DFAT strongly encourages scholars to undertake language training as part of their NCP scholarship program. Language training as part of a scholarship program must be:

- a. undertaken in the same Host location as a study component or a full-time Internship component
- b. in an official language of the Host location where it is undertaken (other than English)
- c. delivered formally and face-to-face by a bona fide training provider (as assessed by DFAT in its sole and absolute discretion) and
- d. for a period of up to six months, undertaken either:
 - i. full-time, which means for a minimum of 15 contact hours per week. (The minimum duration of any full-time Language training is one week. The total cumulative duration of all full time Language training undertaken during the program must not exceed six months), or
 - ii. part-time, concurrently with a Study component or a full-time Internship component (there is no maximum duration).

5.5. Eligible locations

5.5.1. Host locations

Scholarship programs must be conducted only in the following host locations:

Bangladesh	French Polynesia	Maldives	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Bhutan	Hong Kong	Marshall Islands	Palau	Taiwan
Brunei Darussalam	India	Mongolia	Papua New Guinea	Thailand
Cambodia	Indonesia	Myanmar	Philippines	Timor-Leste
China	Japan	Nauru	Republic of Korea	Tonga
Cook Islands	Kiribati	Nepal	Samoa	Tuvalu
Federated States of Micronesia	Laos	New Caledonia	Singapore	Vanuatu
Fiji	Malaysia	Niue	Solomon Islands	Vietnam

5.5.2. Primary location

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

A Scholar may undertake their Scholarship program in more than one Host location (other than the Primary location) and/or at more than one Host institution or Host organisation. Where an Applicant proposes to undertake a Scholarship program in more than one Host location, the Applicant must outline in their Application the rationale for including the Secondary location/s in the Scholarship program.

If a Scholar undertakes Scholarship program components at a Secondary location, the total time spent at all Secondary locations combined must not exceed the total time spent at the primary location.

Inclusion of a Secondary location in an NCP scholarship program does not entitle a Scholar to 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 the proposed Host locations and regions before deciding whether to apply. Scholars must make their own independent enquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel and to the Host location(s), and ensure they are fully informed about the risks at all times.

If a Scholar has difficulty arranging a visa for their Host location(s), the Scholar should ask their Case manager for advice on obtaining visas for those locations, based on past scholars' experiences. Scholars must obtain travel medical advice, including any necessary vaccinations, prior to commencing travel.

Scholars must not travel to a Host location or region within a Host location for which the Australian Government's Smarttraveller advice recommends 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' (see www.smarttraveller.gov.au). Where the Smarttraveller 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, the Scholar's Case manager will work with the Scholar to identify an alternative Host location if required.

Scholars are required to acknowledge in their Scholarship agreement (see Section 10.1) that they have considered the risks carefully and investigated safety precautions before deciding to travel to any host location. Scholars must work with their Home university to address the issues identified in the risk assessment for Host locations undertaken in Section 2.5.

5.6. Permitted gaps

During the Scholarship term, gaps may be approved on the terms set out in the Scholarship agreement during which the Scholar is not required to undertake the Scholarship program on a full-time basis in accordance with Section 5.1(c).

A permitted gap must not result in the Scholarship term exceeding 19 months; or include any additional costs to the NCP Scholarship Program, the Contractor, the Host institution(s), the Host organisation(s) (if any) or Language training provider (if any).

A permitted gap may impact on a Scholar's entitlement to Insurance under the relevant policy terms. Scholars are responsible for informing themselves of the insurance policy terms and taking out any appropriate alternative or additional insurance cover where the insurance is impacted by a permitted gap.

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 5.6(a)(i)).

Gap leave is calculated in calendar days between full-time components.

When applying for gap leave, Scholars must demonstrate it is reasonably necessary in order to complete their Scholarship program, with no reasonable alternatives. Scholars must apply for gap leave as soon as possible on becoming aware of the requirement for gap leave. Scholars must remain in one of the eligible Host locations during any period of gap leave.

Except in relation to the insurance, Scholarship benefits are unaffected by approved gap leave.

- b. **Leave of absence** - for a maximum of:
 - i. two weeks in the first 12-month period of a NCP Scholarship program, and
 - ii. one week in any subsequent period of an NCP Scholarship program (in addition to any unused leave of absence under Section 5.6ai).

Leave of absence is calculated in calendar days between full-time components.

A leave of absence may be for personal or professional development, compassionate and compelling reasons, or for issues relating to the Scholar's safety and security.

Except in relation to the insurance, scholarship benefits are unaffected by approved a leave of absence.

- c. **Suspension** - a suspension may be applied for on the terms set out in the NCP Scholarship agreement, including where a Scholar has exhausted their entitlement to apply for a

permitted gap. DFAT may also require a suspension in accordance with the processes set out in the Scholarship agreement.

During any period of suspension there is no entitlement to, or payment of, NCP Scholarship benefits or payments for costs incurred during the suspension.

5.7. Community engagement and advocacy

The Australian Government, including through its overseas network of diplomatic missions and offices, may invite Scholars to participate in events during their NCP Scholarship, in addition to the formal requirements of the Scholarship program.

Scholars are strongly encouraged to share their experiences of their Scholarship program with the NCP Secretariat, other students and their community, including through engaging with the NCP alumni community and through appropriate use of social media. They are strongly encouraged to participate in activities that promote the NCP, and to advocate for the NCP, including the benefits of studying and undertaking work placements in the Indo-Pacific.

5.8. Scholarship benefits

5.8.1. Overview

Scholars are responsible for their own financial circumstances while undertaking their NCP Scholarship program. Before applying for a Scholarship, an applicant must consider their personal circumstances and ensure that undertaking a Scholarship program will not overextend them financially. In particular, Applicants should be aware that exchange rates can fluctuate.

Scholars may receive the Scholarship benefits described in Sections 5.8.2, 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 set out in the Scholarship agreement. In most cases, Scholarship benefits are paid as a reimbursement to the Scholar or directly to the Host institution, Host organisation, Language training provider or relevant third party, and not to the Scholar in advance. Any Scholarship benefits received must only be used for the purpose of the Scholarship program.

All amounts 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 an NCP Scholarship program is eligible for grant funding. The DFAT program delegate makes the final decision on what constitutes eligible expenditure and may provide guidance 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. A Scholar is responsible for any tuition fees in excess of the maximum amount per activity.

Item	Activity	Length of activity	Expenses payable under the Tuition fees	Maximum amount of expenses payable as Tuition fees for the activity
1	Study component	Any period up to a maximum of two semesters or three trimesters (as defined by the Host institution)	1. Course fees at the Host institution where the Scholar is a fee-paying international student. The tuition fees only cover course fees at the Host institution if no current exchange agreement relevant to the Scholar's field of study is available between the Home university and the Host institution. The Scholar's entitlement to payment of course fees is considered and approved as part of the initial acceptance of applications. Any requested changes after Applications have been submitted are subject to consideration and approval on a case by case basis as a variation request under the Scholarship agreement, in accordance with the process in Section 10.2. 2. Applicable student services and amenities fees at the Host institution. 3. Other amounts payable to the Host institution where all of the following requirements are met: (a) the total of the costs is more than \$200 (b) the costs are not covered under an applicable exchange agreement place (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. Examples of this cost may include compulsory course field trips within the host location; fieldwork research costs (Honours); compulsory materials or equipment (e.g. safety or personal protective equipment)	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
2	Full-time Language training (more than one month, to a maximum of six months)	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 (one month or less)	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 a Scholar will be paid as tuition fees for activities undertaken during an NCP 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 one-off Travel allowance** of \$2,500 paid to a Scholar (\$1,250 paid prior to travel to the Host location and \$1,250 paid upon 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. **A one-off Establishment allowance** of \$2,500 paid to a 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 ('Fellow allowance') to purchase study materials for use during their Scholarship and to contribute to costs associated with the Fellow's promotion of the NCP. Scholars that are appointed as Fellow under more than one applicable award will receive a Fellow allowance of \$1,000 for each position.
- c. **A Scholarship allowance** of up to \$2,500 paid to a Scholar as a monthly stipend during the Scholarship term to contribute to the Scholar's basic living costs in their Host location.
- d. **A Mental health allowance** of \$1,000 reimbursed to a Scholar to contribute to the cost of any mental health services, including professional services (such as by qualified/registered psychologists and social workers to assist with personal issues, such as coping with life changes and fostering mental wellbeing).

5.8.4. Other scholarship benefits

Scholars also receive:

5.8.4.1 Insurance

Health and travel insurance while outside Australia, are provided under an existing policy of cover and are subject to certain terms and exclusions. On a case-by-case basis, a scholar may also be considered for, and if approved by DFAT, may 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 Contractor is assigned to the Scholar for the duration of their scholarship term and 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. All Scholars are eligible and will be considered for private sector sponsorship, which offers benefits in addition to the NCP Scholarship.

DFAT has entered into sponsorship agreements with private sector organisations for the provision of in-kind benefits to the NCP. Sponsors are able to associate their brand with the NCP such as through the NCP (Business Name) Scholarship for (Location). This is considered a 'Sponsored scholarship'. Benefits may be directed to Scholars, including enhanced Internship packages, training opportunities (such as leadership training) and other benefits. Agreements will be put in place regarding Scholar benefits and obligations under a Sponsored scholarship.

Sponsors provide DFAT with a set of criteria which DFAT uses to award Sponsored scholarships. Criteria may include discipline, location, Host institution/Home university, or other relevant factors.

For example, a Sponsored scholarship may be awarded to the top-ranked business student studying in Singapore.

Following the selection process set out in Section 8, DFAT will prepare a shortlist of scholars who meet the criteria for each sponsored scholarship. With the consent of the shortlisted scholar, DFAT will provide the scholar's details to the relevant sponsor. Sponsors will contact scholars directly and determine who will be awarded the sponsored scholarship.

Scholars offered a sponsored scholarship must negotiate directly with the sponsor on the timing 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 at interview). Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview.

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

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated higher-order cognitive skills, creativity, innovation, communication skills, problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills in their university study. Applicants may also draw on academic achievements such as academic awards and commendations, publications, or other examples of academic excellence at the tertiary level. *(Maximum 300 words.)*

High school academic achievements will not be considered.

6.1.2. Leadership and engagement in the community (25 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated leadership in the community, including in volunteer and not-for-profit roles, employment and/or other activities they have undertaken locally, nationally, overseas and/or at their university. Applicants should provide an example of a leadership role they have undertaken. *(Maximum 300 words.)*

6.1.3. Adaptability and resilience (25 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated ability to adapt to change and thrive in a different environment, and their resilience in the face of challenges. *(Maximum 300 words.)*

6.1.4. Ability to contribute to NCP's strategic objective and outcomes (25 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated understanding of the Strategic objective and Outcomes of the NCP program, and how the Applicant and their proposed Scholarship program would contribute to the NCP Strategic objective and Outcomes, including on return to Australia. *(Maximum 300 words.)*

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 Australian universities
- e. how the proposal contributes to value with relevant money.

6.3. Selection of Fellows

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

Selection panels will nominate, from amongst highly-ranked applicants, to be NCP Fellows:

- a. one Fellow for each host location
- b. one Indigenous fellow
- c. one ASEAN fellow whose proposed program will be conducted in an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) host location and most closely aligns with promoting close cooperation with ASEAN

DFAT's program delegate decides which candidates are offered a fellowship. DFAT may establish further categories of fellows at its discretion.

7. How to apply

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

7.1. Overview

DFAT or the Contractor will contact individuals nominated by Australian universities by email and provide instructions on how to submit an Application.

Each Applicant must:

- a. complete the online application form available from a link provided to the applicant by DFAT, accessible via <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>
- b. provide all information requested

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.

- c. address all Eligibility requirements and Assessment criteria
- d. include all necessary attachments, and
- e. submit their Application online through <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/> by the closing time.

An Applicant may only submit one Scholarship program proposal. An Applicant cannot change their Primary location in their Application once it has been submitted.

Each Applicant is responsible for ensuring their Application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code 1995* (Cth). Applications may be excluded from consideration, offers revoked or a Scholarship terminated if DFAT reasonably believes that false or misleading information has formed a component of an application. Further terms relating to the termination or cancellation of 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 and DFAT will not accept requests to correct an Application after the closing time.

Each applicant should keep a copy of their Application and any supporting documents.

DFAT will acknowledge receipt of a submitted Application via an automatically generated email.

7.2. Written applications

Applicants must provide written responses to the Assessment criteria. An Applicant must also outline their proposed Scholarship program, including the mandatory Study component, any proposed Internships, Mentorships and Language training, and the Host location(s) in which they intend to undertake each component of their Scholarship. Applicants must nominate a Primary host location in their application.

7.3. Referee reports

Applicants must submit two referee reports with their Application, with at least one report from an academic referee.

Each referee must:

- a. comment substantively on the Applicant's abilities and experience relevant to the Assessment criteria, and
- b. hold a position that gives their comments credibility (for example, a position in the Applicant's Home university, workplace or community).

7.4. Attachments to the application

Applicants must also submit the following documentation:

- a. evidence of Australian citizenship (e.g. current Australian passport biopage or Australian citizenship certificate)
- b. a letter of current enrolment from their Home university, including expected completion date for the course towards which the overseas study program will be credited
- c. a current, complete-to-date official academic transcript from their Home university

- d. evidence of affiliation with their proposed Host institution if applicable, and evidence that the Applicant or their Home university has made 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 2023 and 15 December 2023, 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 2023 and 15 December 2023, 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 2023 and 15 December 2023
- 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.
- f. a current CV outlining the Applicant's work experience, community engagement activities (including, for example, volunteering, memberships, mentoring) and extra-curricular interests.

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 list below summaries the indicative key dates and steps in the selection process. DFAT may amend the timeframe at any time by posting a notice on GrantConnect.

Expected timing for this grant opportunity

- a. Guidelines published on GrantConnect (<https://www.grants.gov.au>): **28 March 2022**
- b. Australian universities nominate students. Nominations must be made via <https://ncponline.education.gov.au/>: **22 June 2022 – 19 July 2022 (four weeks)**
- c. Nominations close at 11.30pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST): **19 July 2022**

- d. Nominated students receive an invitation to complete an online application. Applicants complete and submit their application and supporting documentation: **20 July 2022 – 16 August 2022 (four weeks)**
- e. Applications close at 11.30pm AEST ('Closing Time'): **16 August 2022**
- f. Applications are shortlisted. Shortlisted Applicants are notified: **September 2022**
- g. Shortlisted Applicants are interviewed: **September – October 2022**
- h. 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 2022**
- i. Scholars are announced and their details published on the NCP website: **November - December 2022**
- j. Scholars commence their scholarship: **1 January 2023 – 15 December 2023**

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 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 **2 August 2022**.

8. The grant selection process

8.1. Assessment of applications

DFAT will only accept and consider Applications submitted by the Closing Time. DFAT assesses applications as follows:

Stage 1: Eligibility screening

Only Applications that meet all Eligibility requirements will be assessed in Stage 2.

Stage 2: Assessment of written applications against assessment criteria

Eligible Applications are assessed through a competitive process by a panel of assessors who are experienced in assessing Commonwealth grant applications or similar processes managed by Commonwealth departments. DFAT and/or the Contractor 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 addresses the Assessment criteria, and
- b. how it compares to other Applications.

The assessors provide an order of merit to DFAT. The NCP Secretariat determines 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

DFAT or the Contractor invites shortlisted Applicants to attend an interview in accordance with the timetable in Section 7.5.

Members of interview panels have relevant expertise and are drawn from: senior government officials, private sector representatives, experts on Indo-Pacific affairs and international education specialists.

Panels rate each Applicant on the basis of the Assessment criteria and other considerations outlined in Section 6.2.

8.2. Who will approve the award of scholarships?

The NCP Secretariat moderates the interview panel recommendations and presents the findings to the program delegate (DFAT First Assistant Secretary responsible for the NCP) who decides the Applicants to be awarded a Scholarship, taking into account recommendations of the interview panels and the availability of NCP program funds.

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

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

There is no appeal mechanism for the delegate's decision to award or not award a Scholarship.

DFAT will advise the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the outcome of the round.

9. Notification of application outcomes

DFAT or the Contractor will advise Applicants of the outcome of their Application via email. DFAT will advise successful Applicants of any specific conditions attached to the Scholarship. DFAT will also advise Home universities of the successful Applicants from their university.

9.1. Feedback on applications

Individual feedback will not be provided to unsuccessful Applicants. After the conclusion of the round, DFAT will publish advice to Applicants on the NCP website. This includes advice on what makes a strong application and the main reasons applications were unsuccessful.

Unsuccessful Applicants may apply for any future grant opportunities under the NCP. Any subsequent Application will be assessed on its merits, based on the guidelines in place at the time.

9.2. Offer and acceptance processes

Each offer of a Scholarship is subject to the Applicant accepting and signing a Scholarship agreement and being able to obtain appropriate visa(s) for their Host location(s).

10. Successful grant applications

10.1. Scholarship agreement

A Scholar must enter into a legally binding Scholarship agreement with the Commonwealth before Scholarship benefits can be paid to the Scholar or a third party and before the Scholar commences the Scholarship program.

Applicants should read the sample Scholarship agreement before submitting their Application. The Australian Government will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Scholar or a third party in relation to a Scholarship program before a Scholarship agreement is entered into.

The Scholarship agreement will detail the Scholar's responsibilities in relation to the Scholarship program and the Scholarship benefits payable by the Australian Government. The Scholarship agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the 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.

The version of the Guidelines in place at the closing date/time of this round will apply to the Scholarship program.

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
- b. increase the duration of the Study component(s), Language training or Internship component, or
- c. change any other aspect of their Scholarship program where exceptional circumstances prevent them from completing the Scholarship program as initially proposed.

Any request for a variation must be made on a program variation request form provided by the Case manager, at least one month in advance of the proposed variation commencing, or such shorter period as required by the circumstances.

The decision to approve a variation to a Scholarship program will be made on a case-by-case basis by DFAT or the Contractor, in its sole and absolute discretion. Without limitation, DFAT or the Contractor, as the case may be, may consider:

- a. the merits of the request (and funding being available, if required) in respect of achieving the NCP Strategic objective and Outcomes
- b. demonstrated coherence across the Study components, and any Language training and Internship components of the NCP Scholarship Program, and
- c. ensuring that the Scholarship program remains consistent with the Eligibility requirements.

Scholars are liable for any financial commitments made by them in relation to their proposed change of Scholarship program where those commitments are made before receiving formal advice granting the Scholarship program variation.

10.3. Specific legislation and policies

Scholars must comply with all relevant Australian, as well as, the local laws and regulations of their Host locations, while in Australia and in host locations on Scholarship. This includes compliance with laws in relation to child protection and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

DFAT does not tolerate exploitation, abuse or harassment. This applies within DFAT and extends to those we work with. NCP scholars must read and adhere to DFAT's Child Protection Policy and Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy, which set out expectations in relation to appropriate behaviours and reporting requirements. DFAT takes all allegations and reported incidents of exploitation, abuse and harassment seriously. NCP scholars also have an obligation to comply with their university's policies on child protection and PSEAH.

Scholars should take into account the Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector.

10.4. How DFAT pays the grant

The Scholarship agreement sets when and how Scholarship benefits will be provided to Scholars.

Some Scholarship benefits will be paid directly to the Scholar. Other Scholarship benefits, such as tuition fees, will be paid directly to the Host institution or Language training provider, as relevant.

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 publicise details of individual Scholarships and Scholars including, but not limited to:

- a. names of successful Scholars, their Home university, Host location(s), Host institution, Host organisation and Language training provider
- b. description of Scholarship programs being supported (including timing)
- c. the amount of funding awarded, and
- d. photographs of Scholars, both provided by Scholars or taken at DFAT and other events

12. How DFAT monitors grant activity

Requirements and expectations for monitoring a Scholar's Scholarship program are set out in the Scholarship agreement.

12.1. Keeping DFAT informed

Scholars must inform DFAT or the Contractor if anything is likely to affect their ability to undertake their Scholarship program, in accordance with the Scholarship agreement.

12.2. Reporting

Scholars must report in accordance with the Scholarship agreement.

12.3. Evaluation

The Australian Government reports on and evaluates the NCP Scholarship Program. DFAT and the Contractor may use information about scholars and their Scholarship program, Home university, Host institution, Host organisation and Language training provider for performance monitoring and management of the NCP, and to evaluate how effective the program is in achieving the NCP Strategic Objective and Outcomes. DFAT may also draw on information to create testimonials for NCP promotion.

DFAT and the Contractor will monitor performance and manage scholarships through [NCPOnline](#). Information about applicants, program outcomes and performance will also be collected.

Program stakeholders, including university representatives, interview panel members, nominees and scholars may be asked to participate in evaluating the NCP Scholarship Program.

NCP scholar alumni are expected to participate in surveys and other program monitoring and evaluation activities after completion of their scholarship program, as required by DFAT.

13. Probity

The Australian Government will ensure the grant opportunity process is fair, in accordance with the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

The Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme provides the public with visibility of the nature, level and extent of foreign influence on Australia's government and politics. It is recommended that you review obligations and responsibilities under the scheme at [Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme | Attorney-General's Department \(ag.gov.au\)](#).

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

Section 9.1 provides information about feedback on Applications.

Enquiries and feedback about decisions for this scholarship opportunity should be sent to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

If an Applicant, or any other person, does not agree with the way DFAT has handled their feedback/complaint, they can refer the matter to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with DFAT.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

The Australian Government is not responsible for any misunderstanding arising from the failure by an Applicant to comply with these guidelines, or arising from any ambiguity, discrepancy or error contained in an Application.

13.2. Conflicts of interest

Any conflict of interest could affect the performance of the NCP Program or an NCP Scholarship. An Australian university that makes a nomination must disclose any conflict of interest in relation to a nomination in writing to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au at the time of submitting the nomination form or when the conflict of interest arises or is likely to arise. Australian universities must take such steps as reasonably required by DFAT to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest.

Applicants must disclose any conflict of interest in relation to an Application in writing to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au at the time of submitting the Application or when the conflict of interest arises or is likely to arise. Applicants must take such steps as DFAT reasonably requires to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest for Australian government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct (section 13(7)) of the *Public Service Act 1999*. Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

13.3. Privacy

DFAT and its contractors are bound by the provisions of the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Privacy Act), including the Australian Privacy Principles which prescribe rules for handling personal information.

DFAT and its contractors collect personal information, including from home universities and other third parties, in relation to applications under the NCP. Types of personal information collected include personal details (name, gender, date of birth and contact details), academic results and equity information.

Personal information will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which it was collected, or otherwise in accordance with the Privacy Act. DFAT and its contractors collect personal information for the purpose of administering the NCP, including the following purposes:

- a. assessing Applications,
- b. administering and performance monitoring of the NCP,
- c. promoting the NCP, including to Scholarship recipients and to media representatives and in promotional material, information and publications in hardcopy and/or on the internet, and
- d. inviting NCP Scholars and alumni to relevant functions and events held in Australia and overseas.

In accordance with the Privacy Act, information collected for a primary purpose may sometimes be used or disclosed for a related secondary purpose. For example, DFAT may disclose personal information in relation to applications under the NCP Scholarship Program to:

- a. other Australian Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Education, 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 Officers for Scholarships,
- f. potential Internship/Mentorship Host Organisations, Language Training Providers, Host Location governments/authorities or non-government organisations. These may be foreign organisations (noting that they may not be bound by Australian privacy legislation or equivalent privacy legislation in their own countries);
- g. Scholarship sponsors, including but not limited to companies or professional bodies, and
- h. media representatives, including foreign media representatives.

DFAT may also disclose personal information in relation to applications under the NCP Scholarship Program to overseas recipients in accordance with the Privacy Act. This may include host institutions, potential internship/mentorship host organisations, language training providers, host location governments/authorities and non-government organisations.

If an Applicant does not consent to DFAT or its contractor(s) collecting, using and disclosing their personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act, DFAT may not be able to process their Application.

DFAT's [Privacy Policy](#) contains information about DFAT's collection, use, disclosure and storage of personal information, including sensitive information, and how individuals may access and correct personal information that we hold.

13.4. Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, an Applicant or Scholar must agree not to disclose to any person, other than DFAT, any confidential information relating to the Application and/or Scholarship agreement, without DFAT's prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where the Applicant or Scholar is required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

DFAT may at any time, require the Applicant to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of DFAT's confidential information in a form DFAT considers acceptable.

DFAT will keep any information in connection with the Scholarship agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all three conditions below:

1. the Applicant/Scholar clearly identifies the information as confidential and explain why DFAT should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to the Applicant/Scholar or someone else.

DFAT will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the NCP Scholarship Program effectively
- employees and contractors of DFAT so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse DFAT programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Australian Government agencies for law enforcement purposes, where the disclosure will serve the Australian Government's legitimate interests and, if necessary, to substantiate an Applicant's claims
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in NCP Scholarship Program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, or
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The Scholarship agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the Scholarship agreement.

13.5. Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (Cth) (FOI Act).

Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government, subject to exemptions.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: The Director, Freedom of Information and Privacy Law Section
Legal Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
R.G. Casey Building, John McEwen Crescent
BARTON ACT 0221

By email: foi@dfat.gov.au

14. Glossary

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which they live, or formerly lived

Academic transcript

an official document issued by the home university as a record of all completed units and results throughout the student's enrolment

Academic year

the annual period of study sessions of a home university and/or host institution

Administering entity

the entity responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes

Applicant

a person who is applying or has applied for an NCP Scholarship.

Application

an application for a scholarship under the NCP Scholarship Program

Assessment criteria

the principles or standards against which applications will be judged, as set out in Section 6

Australian 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

bachelor Level 7 as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Bachelor honours degree

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

Case manager

staff of the Contractor assigned to a scholar and responsible for providing that scholar with information and support to undertake their scholarship program

Closing date/time

the date and time beyond which applications will not be accepted, as specified in the Section 7.5

Commencement

the date in the application that the scholar is required to commence their scholarship program

Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)

establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.

Concurrent diploma

undergraduate studies at a diploma level as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework, undertaken concurrently with a Bachelor degree or Bachelor honours degree.

Confidential information

information which satisfies the criteria listed at Section 13.5 or is designated by the Australian Government as confidential or that either party knows or ought to know is confidential. This does not include information that is otherwise in the public domain.

Conflict of interest

real, apparent, or potential private or personal associations or interests (financial or non-financial) which improperly influence, or may improperly influence, a person's performance of their role and responsibilities in relation to the NCP Scholarship Program

Contractor (the Contractor)

DFAT's Managed Administration and Support Services Contractor for the New Colombo Plan

Disability

any limitation, restriction or impairment which restricts everyday activities or assistance is required and has lasted or is likely to last for at least six months.

Eligibility requirements

the mandatory requirements which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility requirements

Establishment allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(b)

Fellow

the meaning in Section 6.3

Fellow allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(b)

Foreign Arrangements Scheme

the Foreign Arrangements Scheme is administered by DFAT to implement *Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020*

Gender

part of a person's social and personal identity, and may not necessarily be the same as the person's sex. When applying, individuals are given the option to select M (male), F (female) or X (Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified).

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 DFAT Portfolio Budget Program.

[GrantConnect](#)

the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs.

Home university

the Australian university which nominated the applicant(s), at which an applicant or scholar is enrolled while applying for and undertaking their scholarship program and which will confer the student's degree upon completion.

Host institution

a university or other education provider where the scholar undertakes their study component in the host location.

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.

Host location

the geographic location(s) in the Indo-Pacific, as listed in section 5.5.1, in which the scholar undertakes their scholarship program.

Host organisation

the organisation at which the scholar undertakes an internship or mentorship in the host location

Insurance

the meaning in Section 5.8.4

Internship

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

Internship component

an internship undertaken as part of a scholarship program that meets the eligibility requirements in Section 5.3.1

Language training

training in a language undertaken as part of a scholarship program that meets the eligibility requirements in Section 5.4

Language training provider

a bona fide provider of language training at which a scholar undertakes language training in the host location

Low socio-economic status

students who are from a low socio-economic background, as measured by the lowest quartile of the ABS Socio-Economic Index for Areas Index of Education and Occupation measured at Statistical Area 1 level

Mental health allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(d)

Mental health service

professional counselling to foster a state of well-being, in which the scholar realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

Mentorship

a developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person guides a less experienced or less knowledgeable person, relevant to work, career, or professional development

Mobility program

see the meaning of **New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program** below

New Colombo Plan (NCP)

the NCP Scholarship Program, NCP Mobility Program, and NCP Alumni Program

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Liaison Officer for Scholarships

the person(s) designated by an Australian university to submit student nominations and receive NCP Program updates

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program

the program of that name administered by DFAT

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program

the meaning in Section 2.2

New Colombo Plan website

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan>

NCP Online

DFAT's online system for managing nominations, applications and scholarships

Outcome

the meaning in Section 2

Offshore campus

of an Australian university refers to an Australian university that has a branch campus in a location other than Australia

PBS Program

described within the entity's [Portfolio Budget Statement](#), PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.

Permitted gap

the meaning in Section 5.6.

Personal information

the same meaning as in the Privacy Act, which defines Personal Information as *"information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is readily identifiable: (a) whether the information or opinion is true or not; and (b) whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not."*

Primary Location

the meaning in Section 5.5.2

Privacy Act

the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)

Private sector organisation

Australian, global and local commercial enterprises (businesses) and non-profit organisations, ranging from those in the informal sector to large multinational organisations, which are not owned by or under the direct control of a government. This does not include host institutions.

Program

the NCP Scholarship Program.

Reasonable accommodation

the provision of support, modifications and/or adjustments that meet the individual needs of scholars with disabilities to enable their participation in the NCP on an equal basis with other scholars

Regional/remote

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

Scholar

an applicant awarded an NCP Scholarship

Scholarship

An award under the NCP Scholarship Program, including the relevant scholarship benefits

Scholarship agreement

the agreement entered into between the Commonwealth and a scholar prior to the start of their scholarship program, in substantially the form of the example provided on the NCP Website

Scholarship allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(c)

Scholarship benefits

Travel Allowance, establishment allowance, fellow allowance (if applicable), scholarship allowance, tuition fees (if applicable), mental health allowance and insurance as described in Section 5.8 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)

Scholarship program commencement date

the date in the application on which the scholar is required to commence the scholarship program or such other later date in accordance with the scholarship agreement

Scholarship program completion date

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 duration of a scholarship program starting from commencement and ending on the scholarship program completion date

Secondary location

the meaning in Section 5.5.3

Sponsored scholarship

a scholarship that is sponsored by a private sector organisation for the duration of the scholarship program and which may include in-kind benefits provided to scholars, such as training opportunities

Strategic objective

the meaning in Section 2.1

Study component

an approved course of study at a host institution as part of a scholar's scholarship program that meets the eligibility requirements in Section 5.2

Travel allowance

the meaning in Section 5.8.3(a)

Tuition fees

the monetary contribution available towards a scholar's tuition fees for a study component and language training (if any) as in Section 5.8.2

Value with money

refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources, as determined from a variety of considerations

When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:

- a. the quality of the project proposal and activities
- b. fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives
- c. that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved, and
- d. the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.