



Australian Government



NEW COLOMBO PLAN

Connect to Australia's future - study in the region

# New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2025 Round Guidelines

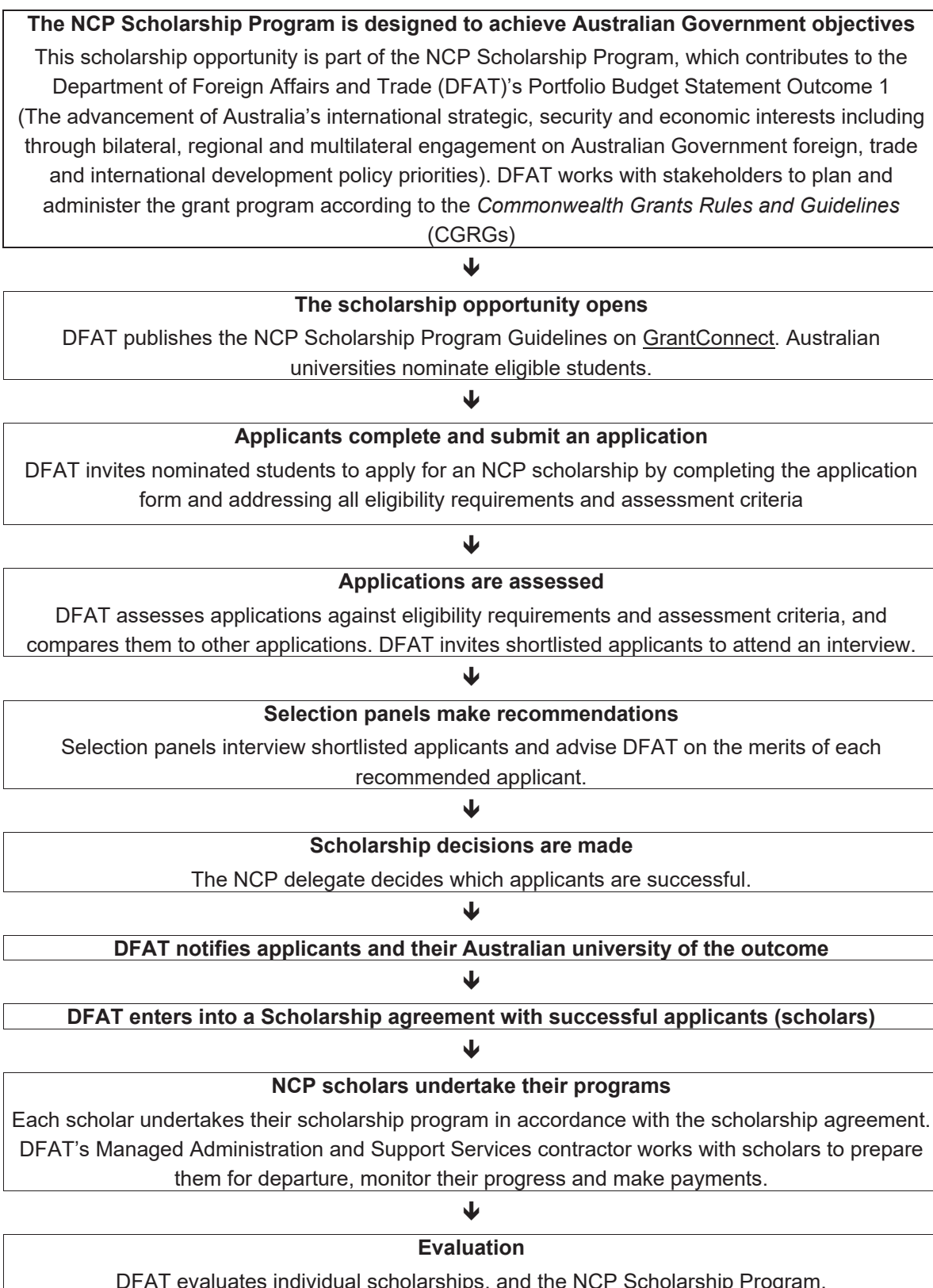
University nominations open:	20 August 2024
University nominations close:	11.30 pm AEST on 8 September 2024
Student applications open:	9 September 2024
Student applications close:	11.30 pm AEST on 6 October 2024
Commonwealth policy and administering entity:	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Enquiries:	Please submit any questions to <a href="mailto:ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au">ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au</a> no later than 29 September 2024
Date guidelines released:	20 August 2024
Type of grant opportunity:	Open competitive

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## 1. New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2025 round process



## 1.1. Introduction

These guidelines apply to the 2025 round of the New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship Program, for the duration of the scholarships awarded in that round. Scholarships awarded in previous rounds comply with guidelines of the round under which they were awarded. Before applying, applicants must read these guidelines and the 2025 Advice to Applicants on the DFAT [website](#). 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
- eligibility requirements and assessment criteria
- how scholars are selected
- how applicants are notified of the outcome
- 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).<sup>1</sup>

## 2. About the grant program

### 2.1. Strategic objective and outcomes of the NCP

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 NCP aims to lift knowledge in Australia of the Indo-Pacific by supporting Australian university students to study and undertake internships in the region.

The NCP has two programs: scholarships (up to 19 months) and mobility grants (between four weeks and two semesters). Both programs include study, internships, mentorships and language training. The NCP also includes the NCP Alumni Program, which is open to all NCP scholars and mobility students on completion of their award, and supports alumni to maintain a connection to each other, the NCP and the Indo-Pacific as they progress in their lives and careers.

The intended outcomes of the NCP are:

- increased number and diversity of Australian university graduates with Indo-Pacific capability and Asia literacy
- 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.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-11/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-guidelines.pdf>

## **2.2. About the NCP Scholarship Program**

The NCP Scholarship Program provides scholarships to a diverse cohort of Australian university students to undertake offshore programs including study, internships, mentorships and language training for up to 19 months in eligible Indo-Pacific host locations.

### **2.2.1. Language stream to support Australia's capability in Indo-Pacific languages**

To further support Australia's capability in the Indo-Pacific and enhance Australia's Asia literacy, the cap on the number of nominations permitted has been removed in this round (see section 4.2) and nominations are strongly encouraged for students who will have language study as a focus in their NCP program i.e. these scholars must undertake a program where at least half of their study component will be the study of an official or commonly spoken language of an eligible NCP host location (other than English) for credit towards their Australian home degree. This proposed study component must be supported by their Australian university. Longer term language study and a higher language-focused study load will be prioritised.

## **2.3. Roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government**

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

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

DFAT or its contractor is not responsible for arranging study, internships, mentorships, language training or travel arrangements (including visas and accommodation). Scholars are responsible, in consultation with their home universities, host institutions, host organisations, language training providers, and their case managers (from the contractor), for planning and carrying out their approved scholarship program.

## **2.4. Roles and responsibilities of Australian universities**

Each participating Australian university:

- a) nominates an NCP International Liaison Officer (ILO) for Scholarships (and an alternative contact, where possible) who will submit nominations on behalf of the Australian university and receive updates during the selection process.
- b) may nominate students to apply for the NCP Scholarship Program

In nominating students for the NCP Scholarship Program, the Australian university agrees to:

- i. obtain the consent of each nominee to provide their personal details to DFAT (see section 4.2)
- ii. ensure all personal information, including email addresses, provided about nominees is accurate and up-to-date
- iii. support each applicant to arrange a study component and confirm that each applicant's proposed study components meet the requirements in section 5.2.1
- iv. assist applicants to obtain evidence of acceptance by their host institution and should support them to arrange internships, mentorships and language training
- v. work with scholars to undertake risk assessments of host locations (see section 5.5.4) and approve the risk assessments at least six weeks prior to the scholar's departure from Australia

- vi. work with scholars to update risk assessments to reflect any new host locations or new program components proposed by scholars during their program, and approve the risk assessments at least six weeks prior to departure to the new host location or commencement of the new program component
- vii. approve internship and language training proposals that are credit-bearing to the applicants' home degree
- viii. ensure staff and participating students are aware of and comply with DFAT's [Child Protection Policy](#) and [Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#) including the reporting obligations under these policies (see section 10.2)
- ix. ensure that applications comply with the guidelines, include all supporting documentation and are correct and complete

Australian public universities have obligations 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 ILOs when necessary.

## 2.5. Roles and responsibilities of applicants

Each applicant:

- a) must ensure their application, including supporting documentation and referee reports, is complete and is submitted by the closing time, and that all information is correct
- b) is responsible for any costs associated with preparing and lodging their application
- c) is responsible for the decision to apply for and, if successful, 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 NCP Scholarship Program
- d) 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
- e) 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
- f) must not propose programs in a host location or region within a host location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller advice is 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel', as outlined in section 5.5
- g) must exhibit professional behaviour throughout the selection process.

## 2.6. Roles and responsibilities of scholars

Each scholar must:

- a) subscribe to relevant travel advisories on Smartraveller prior to commencing their scholarship
- b) obtain, pay for and comply with appropriate visa/s for the duration of their scholarship. Written advice on visas must be sought from your host location's immigration authorities (not from any other source).

- c) not travel to a host location or region within a host location for which the Australian Government's Smartraveller advice is 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel', as outlined in section 5.5
- d) 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
- e) 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, and complete a risk assessment and have it approved by the home university and case manager at least six weeks prior to departure from Australia
- f) must work with their home university to update risk assessments to reflect any new host locations or new program components proposed during their program, and obtain approval for the risk assessments from the home university and case manager at least six weeks prior to the departure to the new host location or commencement of the new program component
- g) must obtain approval from their Australian university for internship and language training proposals that are credit-bearing to their home degree
- h) comply with their scholarship agreement and its incorporated documents such as the NCP Student Code of Conduct including exhibiting professional behaviour during their scholarship program. Evidence of unprofessional behaviour, including but not limited to, misrepresentation of the truth in an application or at interview, undisclosed conflicts of interest, 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)
- i) agrees to comply with DFAT's [Child Protection Policy](#) and [Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#) including the reporting obligations under these policies (see section 10.2)
- j) cooperate with, and comply with directions given by, DFAT and the contractor
- k) not participate in another offshore scholarship or mobility project while undertaking their scholarship program. After commencing their NCP scholarship program at the host location, NCP scholars are not permitted to pause their scholarship program to undertake another offshore scholarship or mobility project.
- l) arrange all scholarship program components by contacting the relevant host organisations and liaising with their home university.
- m) where a scholar is currently employed and will return to the same employer after the conclusion of their scholarship program, the scholar must obtain written approval from their employer prior to commencing their program that they agree to the scholar undertaking their program, including providing leave. The scholar must also declare any conflict of interest, particularly in relation to their program.
- n) obtaining a medical / health clearance from a medical professional, stating fitness to travel overseas to undertake the NCP program and a plan to manage any pre-existing conditions (this plan is to be included in the risk assessment). The scholar is responsible for any cost of the medical assessment.



## **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 assigns 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 (scholars are still responsible for organising visas, flights, accommodation, study component credit approval and enrolment, and other components)
- c) a briefing pack of relevant information
- d) scholarship allowances
- e) advice and guidance during the scholarship on the components, entitlements and responsibilities
- f) assistance with scholarship variation requests, and
- g) assistance with a scholar's return to Australia on completion of the scholarship.
- h) manage critical incidents involving NCP scholars in conjunction with home and host universities, DFAT and emergency services

The contractor will review each scholar's risk assessment before the scholar departs Australia to confirm whether it is fit for purpose. The contractor will manage critical incidents involving NCP scholars in conjunction with home and host universities, DFAT and emergency services. The contractor will work with home university ILOs, as necessary.

## **3. Grant amount and grant period**

### **3.1. Scholarship grant funding**

A total of \$43.2 million is available in NCP grant program funding for the 2024-25 financial year. This funding covers the NCP Scholarship Program and the Mobility Program.

The maximum total grant amount for an NCP scholarship is \$107,000 (subject to the specific program components and program duration of each scholar).

See section 5.4 for scholarship benefits.

### **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 2025 and 15 December 2025.

## **4. Eligibility criteria**

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 components of the NCP Scholarship Program, at least one Bachelor Degree, Bachelor Honours Degree or eligible undergraduate language-focused course\* at an Australian campus of an Australian university.
- e) be between 18 and 30 years of age (inclusive) for non-Indigenous applicants, or between 18 and 35 years of age (inclusive) for Indigenous applicants on 1 January 2025
- f) not be a previous recipient of an NCP scholarship (note: previous NCP mobility grant recipients are eligible to apply for a scholarship), and
- g) not be an employee of the branch of DFAT or the contractor that administers the NCP

Scholars must continue to meet these eligibility requirements during the term of their scholarship.

\*Note: The definition of 'undergraduate courses' for this purpose is as defined by the [Higher Education Administrative Information for Providers](#) (see Glossary).

## 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.

There is no cap on the number of student nominations from each university to encourage a wider pool of applicants.

Each Australian university may nominate students enrolled at that university, without ranking them, including:

- students who will undertake a study component in any field (provided they meet eligibility requirements in section 4.1 and 5.2.1), and
- for the language stream, students who will undertake a program where at least half of their study component will be the study of an official or commonly spoken language of an eligible NCP host location (other than English) for credit towards their Australian home degree. This proposed study component must be supported by their Australian university. Longer term language study and a higher language-focused study load will be prioritised.

Each Australian university determines its own process for selecting nominees but should consider the eligibility requirements and assessment criteria. Australian universities must only nominate students that they consider to be academically capable of successfully completing their proposed overseas program and building lasting linkages with the Indo-Pacific (see assessment criteria). DFAT strongly encourages Australian universities to ensure their nominees are representative of the diversity of the Australian university student population.

DFAT will consider reasonable accommodation to support participation of students living with a disability. Scholars living with a disability should work with their case manager on a disability

support plan, if needed, prior to departure from Australia. Additional funding for disability support may be provided on a case-by-case basis.

Australian universities must submit nominations online through the NCP Online website. The contractor will provide the Australian university NCP Liaison Officers for NCP Scholarships with instructions to access the website and submit nominations.

Nominees should be aware that the home university will be required, as part of the online nomination process, to provide the following information about each nominee:

- name
- gender
- date of birth
- email address
- mobile phone
- residential address
- degree in which the nominee is enrolled
- academic transcript (official)
- intended primary host location, and
- confirmation that the nominated student has been advised that the contractor will arrange a police check for each applicant who is shortlisted for interview.

The contractor will invite eligible nominated students to submit an application.

Each participating Australian university must ensure that they have appropriate policies in place to handle personal information and have obtained each nominee's written consent to use and disclose their personal information to DFAT for the purpose of nomination in accordance with these Guidelines.

Each applicant must agree to the terms of use of such personal information (section 13.4) when submitting their application.

The contractor will arrange a police check for each applicant who is shortlisted for interview. The Australian Government expects NCP scholars to enhance the reputation of Australia and the NCP while overseas. An adverse finding may 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:

- 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:
  - of between three and 19 months in duration, and

- commence on or between 1 January 2025 and 15 December 2025, and
- c) at all times during the scholarship term, involve the scholar undertaking either:
- a full-time study component
  - a full-time internship component
  - a full-time language training component, or
  - a permitted gap.
- d) be arranged such that the first component is undertaken at the primary host location

In addition, scholarship programs may include:

- a) a part-time internship component (see section 5.2.2) undertaken concurrently with a full-time study component or full-time language training component
- b) a part-time mentorship (see section 5.2.3) undertaken concurrently with a full-time study component, full-time internship component or full-time language training, or
- c) a part-time language training component (see section 5.2.4) undertaken concurrently with a full-time study component or full-time internship component.

The award of an NCP scholarship does not represent automatic approval of proposed program components in the application. All program components will be subject to due diligence and risk assessment to ensure alignment with relevant DFAT policies and must be approved prior to the scholar's departure from Australia and commencement of any component.

## **5.2. Eligible scholarship program components**

### **5.2.1. Study component**

All study components must:

- a) be at least one full-time study period, which is either a semester or trimester as defined by the host institution (summer/winter school or short-term study programs are not eligible)
- b) except via a research-based 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 the completion requirements of a Bachelor Degree, Bachelor Honours Degree or eligible undergraduate language-focused course (see section 4.1). Courses that provide whole or partial credit towards a concurrent Diploma (in addition to full-time academic credit towards a Bachelor Degree, Bachelor Honours Degree or eligible undergraduate language-focused course) are also permitted
- d) for scholars studying a research-based 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). Scholars undertaking a study component that is research-based only (i.e. no coursework) do not need to enrol at the host institution. Scholars undertaking coursework as part of their study component must enrol at the host institution and ensure the course is credited towards their home degree
- e) not exceed the maximum tuition fees payable in section 5.4.2 (for fee-paying students)

- f) be confirmed by the host institution and home university (and approved by the case manager) prior to program commencement.

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.

Study components must not be undertaken at an offshore campus of an Australian university or at a university established or headquartered outside the host location (for example, an offshore campus of a third country university). In exceptional circumstances, DFAT may waive this requirement in exceptional circumstances where the applicant demonstrates there is a strong benefit to the objectives of the NCP Scholarship Program which cannot be achieved by undertaking a program at a local host institution. Applicants who wish to undertake a study component at an offshore campus of an Australian university or at a university established or headquartered outside the host location must seek approval from the NCP Secretariat prior to submitting an application. If approved by the NCP Secretariat, the applicant must include this approval in the application.

An academic transcript showing the course dates and that the scholar has met all course requirements must be provided by the study host institution to the scholar. The scholar must provide the academic transcript to their case manager upon completion of the study component.

All study components must be arranged directly with the local host institution, not through a third party provider. All invoices must be issued by, and will be paid to, the host institution.

### 5.2.2. Internships

Internships enable scholars to have immersive work experiences with Indo-Pacific institutions 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) full-time (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 two weeks. The total cumulative duration of all full-time internships undertaken during a scholarship program must not exceed six months), or
- b) part-time, concurrent with a full-time study component or a full-time language training component (there is no maximum duration), and
- c) in the primary host location, or in a secondary host location, in accordance with section 5.5
- d) with a single internship host organisation.

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 must not be undertaken online or remotely.

Scholars should seek internship opportunities with Indo-Pacific host organisations (rather than Australian-owned organisations/businesses) to ensure their NCP program aligns with the strategic objective and outcomes of the NCP, in accordance with section 2.1. Examples of appropriate internships host organisations include local businesses, institutions, peak bodies, NGOs, civil

society organisations, universities and research agencies that are headquartered in the region, and multilateral organisations. Internships at Australian diplomatic missions are not permitted.

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 courses or participating in conferences/seminars (informal or formal; free or involving payment) does not count as internships.

A scholar who is employed with an organisation (during or prior to taking up an NCP scholarship) must not undertake an internship with that organisation off-shore as part of their NCP program (whether the internship is paid or unpaid).

Internships and mentorships do not need to be confirmed at the time of application. All internships must be approved by DFAT through the contractor before commencement. Internships that are credit-bearing to the scholar's Australian degree must also be approved by the home university before commencement.

All internship components must be arranged directly with the local host organisation, not through a third party provider.

### 5.2.3. Mentorships

A mentorship may only be undertaken concurrently with a full-time study component, full-time internship component, or full-time language training component.

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.

All mentorships must be approved by DFAT through the contractor before commencement.

### 5.2.4. Language training

DFAT strongly encourages scholars to undertake formal language training as part of their scholarship program (in addition to any language learning that may be part of the scholar's study component). 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, or a commonly spoken language or dialect (other than English), of the scholar's host location
- c) delivered formally and face-to-face by a single bona fide training provider (as assessed by DFAT in its sole and absolute discretion).

When proposing to undertake language training a scholar must provide:

- evidence that the language training provider is a registered language training organisation with physical premises and appropriately qualified and experienced language teaching staff, and has policies for ensuring student welfare, managing risk and monitoring student attendance and achievement
  - details of the proposed training, including level, outline of course content, mode/s of delivery and training assessment.
- d) undertaken either:
- full-time, which means for a minimum of 15 contact hours per week (plus personal language study/practice, bringing the expected total hours of language study to between 22 and 38 hours per week.). (The minimum duration of any full-time language training is two weeks. There is no maximum duration, noting the

requirements about maximum scholarship duration in section 5.1 and the maximum amount payable for tuition fees in section 5.4.2), or

- part-time, concurrently with a full-time study component or a full-time internship component (there is no maximum duration, noting the requirements about maximum scholarship duration in section 5.1 and the maximum amount payable for tuition fees in section 5.4.2).

All language training must be approved by DFAT through the contractor before commencement. Language training that is credit-bearing to the scholar's Australian degree must also be approved by the home university before commencement.

On completion of language training a scholar must submit a certificate of completion from the language school, indicating the attendance and the level of language competence achieved by the scholar. The language training tuition fee entitlement may be used to cover the cost of language competence testing at the end of the language training.

All language training components must be arranged directly with the local language training provider, not through a third party provider. All invoices must be issued by, and will be paid to, the local language training provider.

### **5.3. What the scholarship grant money cannot be used for**

You cannot use the grant for the following activities:

- purchase of land
- wages
- major capital expenditure
- covering retrospective costs
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- subsidy of general ongoing administration costs of an organisation such as administration, electricity, phone and rent
- major construction/capital works, or
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility

### **5.4. Scholarship benefits**

#### **5.4.1. 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. Applicants should familiarise themselves with the relative cost of living, including options for suitable accommodation, in their proposed location, before submitting an application.

Scholars may receive the scholarship benefits described in sections 5.4.2, 5.4.3 and 5.4.4 during the scholarship term, depending on their scholarship program and whether they continue to meet the requirements for each benefit in the scholarship agreement.

The scholarship benefits provided to scholars relate only to scholarship round in which the scholar was awarded.

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 in this section or the scholarship agreement are expressed in Australian dollars. Where amounts are converted into foreign currency (including where an invoice is paid on behalf of the scholar, or the scholar's eligibility for a reimbursement needs to be determined), the then current exchange rate will be applied, as determined by DFAT.

Not all expenditure during a scholarship program is eligible for grant funding. The DFAT delegate makes the final decision on eligible expenditure.

#### **5.4.2. 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	As defined in section 5.2.1	<p>1. Course fees at the host institution where the scholar is a fee-paying international student.</p> <p>The tuition fees only cover course fees at the host institution if no current exchange agreement relevant to the scholar's field of study is available between the home university and the host institution. The applicant's proposed study component and study host institution are subject to final approval by DFAT. All study components must be arranged directly with the local host institution, not through a third party provider. All invoices must be issued by, and will be paid to, the host institution.</p> <p>2. Applicable student services and amenities fees at the host institution.</p> <p>3. Other amounts payable to the host institution where all of the following requirements are met:</p> <p>(a) the total of the costs is more than \$200</p> <p>(b) the costs are not covered under an applicable exchange agreement place</p> <p>(c) the host institution certifies in writing that the costs are mandatory for completion of the study component, and</p> <p>(d) an invoice for the relevant amount is issued by the host institution.</p> <p>Examples of this cost may include compulsory course field trips within the host location; fieldwork research costs; compulsory materials or equipment (e.g. safety or personal protective equipment); or the use of the host institution's facilities by scholars undertaking a research-based study component ('bench fees').</p>	Up to \$15,000 per semester or \$10,000 per trimester

Item	Activity	Length of activity	Expenses payable under the Tuition fees	Maximum amount of funding payable for Tuition fees for the activity
2	Language training	As defined in section 5.2.4	Fees for the language training payable to the language training provider. All language training components must be arranged directly with the local language training provider, not through a third party provider. All invoices must be issued by, and will be paid to, the local language training provider.	Up to \$10,000

#### 5.4.3. Allowances

- a) **A one-off travel allowance** of \$3,000 paid to a scholar (\$1,500 paid prior to travel from Australia to the scholar's first host location, and \$1,500 paid upon return from the host location to Australia at the end of the scholarship term) to contribute to costs associated with the scholar's travel to and from the host location, including domestic travel to an international airport for departure and visa costs.
- b) **A one-off establishment allowance** of \$3,000 paid to a scholar to contribute to the costs associated with the scholar settling in at their host location. These may cover expenses such as rental bonds, textbooks, study materials (including IT equipment) and additional medical insurance.
- c) **A scholarship allowance** of up to \$3,000 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 up to \$3,000, reimbursed to a scholar to contribute to the cost of professional mental health services delivered by qualified/registered psychologists and social workers to assist with mental health issues. Scholars are only eligible for this allowance if they are accessing these services while undertaking their program in the host location. This allowance is not applicable for mental health services accessed when the scholar is physically in Australia.
- e) **A one-off fellow allowance** of \$1,000 paid to fellows (see section 6.3) to purchase study materials for use during their scholarship and to contribute to costs associated with the fellow's promotion of the NCP. Scholars who are appointed as fellow under more than one applicable award will receive a fellow allowance for each position.

#### 5.4.4. Other scholarship benefits

Scholars also receive:

##### Insurance

Health and travel insurance while outside Australia are provided under an existing policy of cover and are subject to certain terms and exclusions.

## Allocation of case manager

A case manager from the contractor is assigned to the scholar for the duration of their scholarship term. Their services include pre-departure briefings, advice on health and travel insurance, and payment of scholarship benefits.

## 5.5. Eligible host 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 host location

A primary host 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. Scholars must undertake the majority of their scholarship program at the host location for which they were awarded a scholarship. Scholars must commence their first program component at their primary host location.

### 5.5.3. Secondary host locations

A scholar may undertake their scholarship program in more than one host location and/or at more than one host institution or host organisation. If an applicant plans to undertake part of their scholarship program in a secondary host location, the applicant must outline in their application the rationale for including the secondary host location.

The maximum number of secondary host locations is two and the secondary host locations must align with NCP objectives and be coherent with the objectives of the rest of the scholar's NCP program.

The total time spent at all secondary host locations combined must not exceed the total time spent at the primary host location.

Inclusion of a secondary host location in a scholarship program does not entitle a scholar to any additional travel allowance or establishment allowance (see section 5.4.3).

Scholars who propose a secondary host location after they have commenced their scholarship must seek approval from their case manager. Scholars must update their risk assessment to include the secondary host location and have it approved by their home university and case manager at least six weeks prior to departure to the secondary host location.

### 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. Written advice on visas must be sought from your host location's immigration

authorities (not from any other source). Scholars are responsible for the costs of applying for or obtaining visas. Family members visiting or accompanying a scholar must obtain their own visas. There are no additional entitlements for accompanying family members.

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.

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 Smartraveller advice is 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' (see [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au)). Where the Smartraveller 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 award, the scholar's case manager will work with the scholar to identify an alternate 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 2.4.

## **5.6. Permitted gaps**

While undertaking a scholarship component (commenced but not concluded a component), scholars must not travel to another host location for personal travel to ensure continuity and immersion of their scholarship program.

During the scholarship term, gaps may be approved as detailed in the scholarship agreement. During such gaps 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 counts towards the maximum 19 months of the scholarship term and must not result in the scholarship term exceeding 19 months.

A permitted gap must not incur any additional costs to the NCP Scholarship Program, the contractor, host institution(s), 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 appropriate alternative or additional insurance cover where the insurance is impacted by a permitted gap.

When a scholar has concluded a scholarship program component and has received approval of a confirmed subsequent component, the scholar can apply for gap leave for the period between both components.

When a scholar has concluded a scholarship program component and does not have a confirmed subsequent component, the scholar will be placed on suspension. If the scholar subsequently confirms a component, the suspension period that has already lapsed cannot be retrospectively converted to gap leave, even if the scholar has available gap leave.

A permitted gap may be either:

- a) Gap leave (between components) - when there is a gap between the end of and subsequent commencement of a full-time study component, full-time language training component or full-time internship component and is for a maximum of:
  - i. 28 days in the first 12-month period of an NCP scholarship program (calculated on a pro rata basis if the scholarship program is shorter than 12 months in duration), and
  - ii. 14 days in any subsequent period of an NCP scholarship program (in addition to any unused gap leave under section 5.6(a)(i), and calculated on a pro rata basis if the scholarship program is shorter than 19 months in duration).

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 they become aware of the need for gap leave. Scholars must remain in their current host location or another eligible host location during any period of gap leave.

Scholarship benefits are unaffected by approved gap leave.

- b) **Leave of absence** - for a maximum of:
  - i. 14 days in the first 12-month period of an NCP scholarship program (calculated on a pro rata basis if the scholarship program is shorter than 12 months in duration), and
  - ii. 7 days in any subsequent period of an NCP scholarship program (in addition to any unused leave of absence under section 5.6(b)(i), and calculated on a pro rata basis if the scholarship program is shorter than 19 months in duration).

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

A leave of absence may be for

- personal or professional development (excluding undertaking internships or extending existing internships),
- compassionate and compelling reasons,
- issues relating to the scholar's safety and security
- travel to another host location for visa requirements while a component is underway (commenced but not concluded a component) e.g. during a semester break.

Scholarship benefits are unaffected by approved leave of absence.

- c) **Suspension** - a scholar may apply for a suspension on the terms in the NCP scholarship agreement DFAT may, at its discretion, require a student to be on 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.

If a scholar travels to Australia after commencing their scholarship program, they will be considered to be on suspension for the duration that they are in Australia.

Suspension periods must

- only be used as a last resort, where gap leave or leave of absence has been exhausted

- be kept to a minimum to ensure continuity and immersion of a scholar's program
- not exceed 30 days in a single block.

## 5.7. Community engagement and advocacy

We encourage scholars to engage with local community groups in their host location and to promote the NCP and the linkages it is creating between Australia and the Indo-Pacific.

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

We encourage scholars 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. We encourage scholars 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.

## 6. Assessment criteria

### 6.1. Assessment criteria

In addition to meeting the eligibility requirements, applicants will be assessed in accordance with the process in section 8 and against the following assessment criteria (for both the written application and at interview). Responses are limited to 300 words per criterion. Applicants must be assessed as at least satisfactory against each assessment criterion. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview.

#### **Criterion 1: Academic excellence at the tertiary level** (25 per cent weighting)

Applicants should demonstrate 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. High school academic achievements will not be considered.

#### **Criterion 2: Leadership and engagement in the community** (25 per cent weighting)

Applicant should demonstrate leadership and engagement 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.

#### **Criterion 3: Adaptability and resilience** (25 per cent weighting)

Applicant should demonstrate ability to adapt to change and thrive in a different environment, and their resilience in the face of challenges.

#### **Criterion 4: Ability to contribute to NCP's strategic objective and outcomes** (25 per cent weighting)

Applicants should demonstrate 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.

## 6.2. Other considerations

Where applicants have similarly meritorious claims in relation to the assessment criteria, preference may be given to:

- a) Applicants proposing:
  - a language-focused study component (language stream)
  - longer periods of study components
  - an internship component or a mentorship that is complementary to their overall program
  - a period (or longer periods) of language training that is complementary to their overall program, and/or
  - a well thought out 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 and its objectives during their scholarship and afterwards as part of the NCP alumni network.

Selection panels may nominate, from among highly-ranked applicants, to be NCP fellows:

- a) one First Nations fellow who is encouraged to promote First Nations engagement and participation in the NCP
- b) one ASEAN fellow, one Pacific fellow, one Climate Change fellow and one Language fellow, chosen from scholars whose proposed program closely aligns, and advances the program's objectives, with the relevant organisation/subject.

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

Fellows are entitled to a fellow allowance (see section 5.4.3)

## 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 addenda<sup>2</sup> will be published on

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

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 available from a link provided to the applicant by DFAT
- b) provide all information requested
- c) address all eligibility requirements and assessment criteria
- d) include all necessary attachments, and
- e) submit their application online by the closing time.

An applicant may only submit one scholarship program proposal. An applicant cannot change their primary host 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 scholarship are in the scholarship agreement.

If an applicant finds an error in their application after submitting it, they should email DFAT immediately at [ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au](mailto: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 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. 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 from the applicant's home university.

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, ensuring that dates in the application are consistent with the enrolment letter
- c) a current, complete-to-date official academic transcript from their home university
- d) evidence of affiliation with their proposed host institution if applicable (applicants must liaise with their home university's NCP Liaison Officer for Scholarships or international office to obtain this evidence).
  - 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:
    - 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 2025 and 15 December 2025
  - if intending to apply for a fee-paying place for the study component:
    - 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 5.4.2)
- e) a letter from the applicant's home university faculty, endorsed by the home university's NCP International Liaison Officer for Scholarships, attesting to the feasibility of the applicant's proposed study component, with reference to the requirements in section 5.2.1.
- f) a current CV outlining the applicant's work experience, community engagement activities (for example, volunteering, memberships, mentoring) and extra-curricular interests.
- g) photo identification

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>): **20 August 2024**
- b) Australian universities nominate students: **20 August 2024 to 8 September 2024**
- c) Nominations close at 11.30pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST): **8 September 2024**
- d) Nominated students receive an invitation to complete an online application. Applicants submit their application and supporting documentation: **9 September 2024 – 6 October 2024**
- e) Applications close at 11.30pm AEST ('Closing Time'): **6 October 2024**
- f) Applications are shortlisted. Shortlisted applicants are notified: **October 2024**

- g) Shortlisted applicants are interviewed: **November 2024**
- h) Selections are finalised. Successful and unsuccessful applicants are notified of the outcome of their application: **December 2024**
- i) Scholars are announced and their details published on the NCP website: **December 2024**
- j) Scholars commence their scholarship: **1 January 2025 – 15 December 2025**

## 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](mailto:ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au). If applicable, answers to questions will be posted on GrantConnect.

The NCP Secretariat will not respond to questions received after **1 October 2024**.

## 8. The grant selection process

### 8.1. Assessment of applications and who will assess 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 independent assessors who are experienced in assessing Commonwealth grant applications or similar processes managed by Commonwealth departments. All assessors will be required to perform their duties in accordance with 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.
- c) Whether it provides value with relevant money.<sup>3</sup>

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, we will have regard to

- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the NCP strategic objective and outcomes
- other considerations included in section 6.2.

Referee reports will be considered by assessors in the assessment process.

The assessors provide an order of merit to DFAT. The NCP Secretariat determines which applications are shortlisted for interview based on the order of merit proposed by the assessment panel and other considerations outlined in section 6.2.

#### Stage 3: Interviews

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<sup>3</sup> See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'

DFAT or the contractor invites shortlisted applicants to participate in 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. Panels provide an order of merit to DFAT.

## **8.2. Who will approve the award of scholarships?**

The NCP Secretariat moderates the interview panel recommendations for consistency across panels and with the NCP strategic objective and presents its findings to the 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 delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- a) awarding of scholarships
- 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**

Advice to scholarship applicants is available on the DFAT NCP website, including guidance on the features of strong applications in past rounds.

Individual feedback will not be provided to unsuccessful applicants. 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 their 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 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. Specific legislation and policies**

Scholars must comply with all relevant Australian law, 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 relating 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 must take into account the [Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector](#).

## **10.3. How DFAT pays the grant**

The scholarship agreement provides information on 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.

## **10.4. 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. 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, 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 study components, any internship or mentorship components or any language training components of the 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.

### 12.4. Compliance visits

We may visit scholars during or at the completion of their scholarship grant activity to review their progress and compliance with the scholarship agreement. We will provide scholars with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

### 12.5. 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's

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 the NCP Online website. 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 <https://www.ag.gov.au/integrity/foreign-influence-transparency-scheme>.

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

Enquiries and feedback about this scholarship opportunity should be sent to [ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au](mailto: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](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)

Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://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. Fraud and Corruption

DFAT does not tolerate inaction to fraud or corruption. This applies within DFAT and extends to those DFAT works with. The contractor and Australian universities must have appropriate fraud and corruption controls in place relating to the NCP Program. Specific fraud and corruption obligations for the contractor and Australian universities are set out in relevant agreements. The contractor and Australian universities may also fall under the National Anti-Corruption Commission's jurisdiction. Further information for the contractor and Australian universities over developing strategies to meet DFAT's fraud and corruption control contractual requirements can be found in the DFAT [Fraud Control Toolkit for Funding Partners](#).

The contractor, Australian universities, applicants and scholars must report any fraud or corruption relating to the NCP Program they become aware of to the relevant area within DFAT:

- For passport related fraud: [passports.fraud@dfat.gov.au](mailto:passports.fraud@dfat.gov.au)
- For fraud or corruption by DFAT staff: [conduct@dfat.gov.au](mailto:conduct@dfat.gov.au)
- All other fraud or corruption relation to the NCP Program: [fraud.corruption@dfat.gov.au](mailto:fraud.corruption@dfat.gov.au) (using [this form](#))

To avoid any scams, applicants should obtain official information about the NCP from DFAT or its contractor or from [www.dfat.gov.au/ncp](http://www.dfat.gov.au/ncp).

### 13.3. 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

Scholars must disclose any conflict of interest while undertaking their program by writing to their case manager or to [ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au](mailto:ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au).

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.

### 13.4. 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 accordance with these guidelines in relation to nominations, applications and scholarships awarded under the NCP. Types of personal information collected include personal details (name, gender, date of birth, contact details, and other information required in police checks), 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) contacting nominees to invite them to apply
- b) assessing applications,
- c) administering and performance monitoring of the NCP,
- d) 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
- e) inviting NCP scholars and alumni to relevant functions and events held in Australia and overseas.

DFAT may disclose personal information in relation to applications and scholarships under the NCP Scholarship Program to:

- a) other Australian Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Education and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- 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 will likely 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. The host locations in which such overseas recipients are likely to be located are the eligible host locations listed in section 5.5.1.

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; or
- complain about how DFAT has handled their personal information, and how DFAT will deal with such a complaint

### **13.5. 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 one of the 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.

### **13.6. Freedom of information**

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

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All FOI requests must be made to DFAT's FOI Coordinator in writing.

By mail:           The Director, Freedom of Information Section  
Regulatory and Legal Policy 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 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**

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 at section 7.5

**Commencement**

the date in the application that the scholar is required to commence the first component of 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 5.4.3(b)

### **Fellow**

the meaning in section 6.3

### **Fellow allowance**

the meaning in section 5.4.3(e)

### **Foreign Arrangements Scheme**

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

### **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).

### **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:

- under which relevant money<sup>4</sup> or other [Consolidated Revenue Fund](#) (CRF) money<sup>5</sup> is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth, and
- which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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. Excludes offshore campuses of Australian universities and universities outside the Indo-Pacific

### **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 5.4.4

### **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 5.2.2

### **Language training**

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<sup>4</sup> Relevant money is defined in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* ('**PGPA Act**'). See section 8, Dictionary.

<sup>5</sup> Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

training in a language undertaken as part of a scholarship program that meets the eligibility requirements in section 5.2.4

**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 5.4.3(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 Scholarship 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**

<http://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 a branch campus in a location outside 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 host 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 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 5.4.3(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, 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 12.3)

**Scholarship program commencement date**

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

**Scholarship program completion date**

the date in the scholarship application on which the scholar is required to complete the scholarship program or such other later date as agreed in writing by the parties. The completion date will be the final date of the scholar's last component which would be either the final date for assessment of a study component or language training component, or the final date of the internship.

**Scholarship term**

From the scholarship program commencement date to the scholarship program completion date, including any period(s) of a permitted gap

**Secondary host location**

the meaning in section 5.5.3

**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 5.2.1

**Travel allowance**

the meaning in section 5.4.3(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 5.4.2

**Undergraduate course**

As defined by the Department of Education in [Higher Education Administrative Information for Providers](#), an undergraduate course of study is:

- an undergraduate certificate
- a diploma that is not accredited as a VET award

- an advanced diploma that is not accredited as a VET award
- an associate degree
- a bachelor degree; or
- an honours program

Note – as outlined in section 4.1, NCP scholars must be enrolled in a Bachelor or Bachelor Honours degree at an Australian university, unless they are studying an eligible undergraduate language-focused qualification.

### **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.