



Australian Government



NEW COLOMBO PLAN

Connect to Australia's future - study in the region

New Colombo Plan Semester Program 2026 Round Guidelines

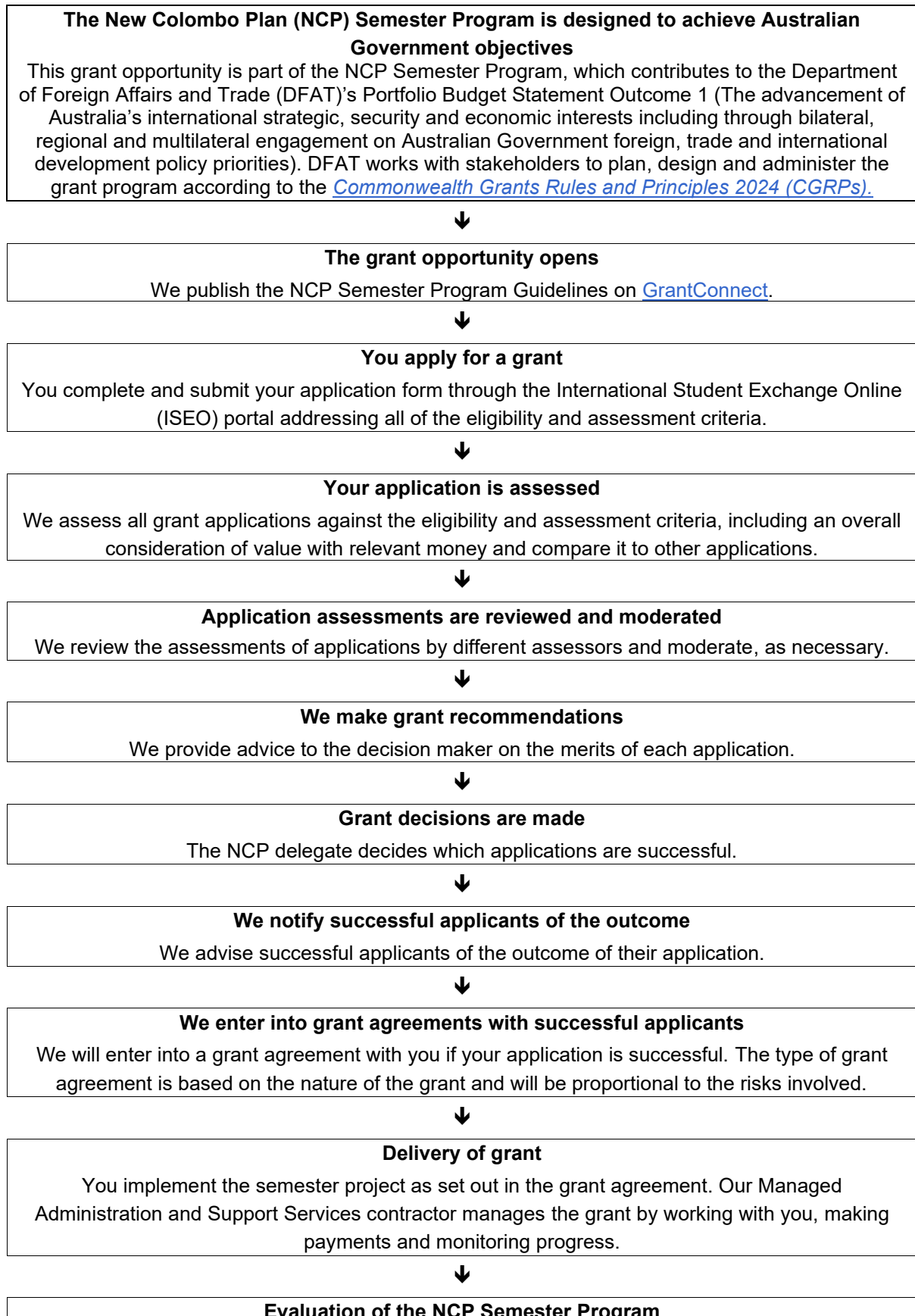
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| Opening date: | 12 August 2025 |
| Closing date and time: | 11.30pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 23 September 2025 |
| Commonwealth policy and administering entity: | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade |
| Enquiries: | If you have any questions, contact ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au Questions should be sent no later than 5.00pm AEST on 16 September 2025 |
| Date guidelines released: | 12 August 2025 |
| Type of grant opportunity: | Open competitive |

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1 New Colombo Plan Semester Program: 2026 Round processes



We evaluate projects, and the NCP Semester Program as a whole, based on information you provide and information that we collect from various sources.

1.1 Introduction

These guidelines apply to the 2026 round of the NCP Semester Program, for the duration of any project awarded funding through this round. Before applying, you must read these guidelines and the 2026 Advice to Applicants on [GrantConnect](#). These guidelines take priority to the extent of any inconsistency with the 2026 Advice to Applicants.

These guidelines set out:

- The NCP strategic objective and outcomes of the NCP Semester Program and this grant opportunity
- the eligibility requirements and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are assessed and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grants
- how grants are monitored and evaluated, and
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

We administer the program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024](#) (CGRPs).¹

2 About the grant program

2.1 Strategic objective and outcomes of the NCP

The strategic objective of the New Colombo Plan, as described in Program 1.5 of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) is to advance Australia's interests and bilateral relationships through enduring people-to-people, institutional and business links with the Indo-Pacific region.

Through Program 1.5, the NCP contributes to DFAT PBS Outcome 1 – the advancement of Australia's international strategic security and economic interests including through bilateral, regional and multilateral engagement on Australian Government foreign, trade and international development policy priorities.

The NCP provides opportunities for Australian undergraduate university students to develop their Indo-Pacific capability and Asia literacy through immersive, structured learning and internships in the Indo-Pacific region. The intended outcomes of the NCP are:

- for participants to acquire Indo-Pacific capability and Asia literacy
- to foster deeper people-to-people and education relationships between Australia and the Indo-Pacific, and
- to increase Australia's economic engagement with the region by supporting NCP participants to build job-ready skills, and supporting NCP alumni to maintain their ties to the Indo-Pacific.

In the 2026 round, the NCP includes three programs:

¹ [Federal Register of Legislation - Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024](#)

- **Scholarships Program:** experiences of up to 19 months for students to strengthen their Indo-Pacific capability and Asia literacy, including through study, language learning and internships.
- **Semester Program:** leveraging Australian universities' partnership arrangements to support one-to-two semester length experiences for students to develop Indo-Pacific capability, including language learning and internships.
- **Mobility Program:** short-term, credit-bearing experiences of four-to-nine weeks to develop Indo-Pacific capability, including structured learning, internships, mentorships, practicums, and/or research.

The NCP also includes NCP alumni engagement, which is open to all NCP scholars, semester and mobility students who have complied with all requirements of the NCP 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.

2.1.1 NCP Semester Program objective and outcomes

The objective of the NCP Semester Program is to provide opportunities for Australian undergraduate students to **build their Indo-Pacific capability and Asia literacy**, including Asian language learning, through semester-length structured learning programs in areas of Australia's strategic and economic interests.

The intended outcomes of the NCP Semester Program include:

- program participants develop their Indo-Pacific knowledge and capability, including language skills, in line with Australia's strategic and economic interests.
- Australian universities leverage institutional partnerships in the Indo-Pacific and there is an expansion of engagement with counterpart institutions in priority host locations, languages, and sectors.
- alumni maintain and develop their Indo-Pacific capability, including language skills, and engagement with the region.

2.2 About the NCP Semester Program

The NCP Semester Program provides funding to Australian universities to leverage their partnership arrangements to support one-to-two semester length experiences for Australian undergraduate students to develop Indo-Pacific capability, including language learning. Credit-bearing internships can also be undertaken.

The 2026 NCP Semester Program will run from 1 January 2026 to 31 July 2028.

2.2.1 Priority areas for selection

To support Australia's capability in Asian languages, immersive experiences and enduring partnerships in the region, priority in the selection processes for the 2026 NCP Semester Program will be accorded to:

- Projects which are to be undertaken in the priority host locations, languages and sectors outlined in section 6.1. These areas are consistent with Australia's foreign policy priorities for engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, including as outlined in [Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040](#) and [A New Roadmap for Australia's Economic Engagement with India](#). These priorities will be reviewed annually.

- Projects where the main focus is for the study of an Asian language. In the 2026 round, all NCP programs (including the NCP Semester Program) will have a language target set at 15 per cent.

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 support the selection process of the NCP Semester Program.

The contractor is the first point of contact on administrative matters, including eligibility for the NCP Semester Program, applications and funding arrangements, variations to approved projects, risk management, completion of reporting and acquittals, and monitoring and evaluation.

This contractor has delegated legal responsibility to act on behalf of the Commonwealth in implementing NCP services. This includes requirements to collect timely information, manage payments and benefits as well as managing project risks, emergencies and safeguards. The contractor has established relationships with our partners overseas and home universities.

DFAT and/or its contractor is not responsible for arranging study, internships, mentorships, language training, travel (including visas and accommodation) or other aspects of projects, including managing risk and critical incidents. Home universities, host institutions, host organisations and language training providers are responsible for planning, implementation and managing projects.

2.4 Roles and responsibilities of Australian universities

Australian universities can apply for funding under the NCP Semester Program to deliver a project. Australian universities are responsible for managing their NCP projects, including the welfare and safety of participating students.

Australian universities are responsible for:

- a) ensuring the project complies with the home university's quality assurance processes
- b) ensuring the project delivered is as originally proposed when funding was granted, or if changes are required, these are sought only in exceptional circumstances and through a variation request before any student travel occurs
- c) being aware of relevant travel advice on the Australian Government's [Smartraveller](#) website and carefully considering the risk of travel to proposed host locations and regions within host locations before applying
- d) actively promoting the NCP and complying with [NCP Media and Publication Guidelines](#)
- e) ensuring the nominated NCP International Liaison Officer (ILO) and staff involved in delivery and oversight of NCP projects are kept informed of communications from the NCP Semester Program, including policy updates and administrative requirements communicated through forums, newsletters and bulletins
- f) actively supporting participation of a diverse range of students
- g) ensuring students are eligible to participate and the process used to select students is fair, independent and transparent, and providing details of this process to DFAT on request
- h) informing students of other funding available to help with the cost of undertaking projects, for example OS-HELP²

- i) ensuring staff and students participating in the project subscribe to relevant travel advisories on Smartraveller prior to travelling overseas. If Smartraveller activates a crisis page for an overseas incident, students in those location(s) must register on that page
- j) ensuring staff and students participating in the project do not travel to or remain in locations where Smartraveller advice is “Do not travel” or “Reconsider your need to travel”
- k) ensuring appropriate risk management and safety precautions are in place, uploading critical incident plans and risk management plans to the International Student Exchange Online portal (ISEO) at least four weeks prior to the commencement of overseas travel. Critical incident plans must include procedures for managing and reporting critical incidents and emergency contact details (the NCP Student Welfare Risk Management Better Practice Guide refers, provided by DFAT or the contractor)
- l) requiring students to obtain travel medical advice, including any necessary vaccinations prior to commencing travel, and the management of pre-existing conditions
- m) ensuring travel insurance has been provided, or supporting students to seek and ensure they have obtained, their own insurance
- n) ensuring adequate support is in place at the host institution and/or host organisation and home university
- o) ensuring 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 10.3)
- p) taking into account the [Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector](#)
- q) complying with all applicable requirements under the *Australia’s Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020 (Cth)*. Australian public universities have an obligation under the [Foreign Arrangements Scheme](#) when entering into arrangements with foreign entities, including certain foreign universities. Universities must comply with these obligations in relation to NCP Semester Program. Information about the Foreign Arrangements Scheme is available at <https://www.foreignarrangements.gov.au/>
- r) not providing support or resources to organisations or individuals associated with terrorism, including ‘terrorist organisation’ as defined in Division 102 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)*
- s) arranging appropriate pre-departure briefing for participating students, including ensuring all students complete DFAT’s online NCP pre-departure training modules (that is the Risks and Responsibilities and Cultural Awareness modules provided by Australian universities)
- t) ensuring students travel using only an Australian passport, obtain appropriate visas for host locations and comply with the terms of those visas, and make reasonable efforts to ensure students do not hold citizenship or permanent residence of the project host location/s
- u) ensuring students are advised that the Australian Government may collect, use, disclose and publish a student’s personal information (see sections 12.4, 13.4 and 13.5)
- v) ensuring all student details are entered into ISEO at least three weeks before a student departs Australia
- w) ensuring all students receive the NCP Semester Program information letter, [NCP Student Code of Conduct](#), and NCP Media and Publication Guidelines prior to departure
- x) ensuring students sign an acknowledgement that they have read the NCP Student Code of Conduct prior to departure
- y) actively issuing NCP Completion Certificates from ISEO to students who have completed a project
- z) providing supplementary information about the project, if requested by DFAT or the contractor, to assist NCP Semester Program promotion, monitoring and evaluation

- aa) submitting a satisfactory completion report within four weeks of the final participating students' return to Australia, including providing additional information, if requested, to enable acceptance of the report
- bb) providing services to encourage, enable and support the participation of a diverse range of students in NCP projects 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, students who are first in their immediate family to attend university, students across genders, female students studying in non-traditional fields, students with disability, and students from a non-English speaking background, and
- cc) complying with all terms and conditions set out in the Deed between DFAT and Australian universities for Student Mobility Programs, as they apply to Student Mobility Programs offered in the 2025 – 2027 rounds.

3 Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants available

NCP has an annual appropriation of \$50.933 million over four years from 2025-26 to 2028-29. A total of \$35.343 million is available for NCP grant funding for the 2025-26 financial year. It is anticipated that \$23.76 million in funding will be available for the NCP Semester Program in 2025-26. Expenditure related to the NCP Scholarships Program 2026 round will be expensed over three financial years.

| | Available Grant Funding \$ million | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>2026 rounds only</i> | FY 2025-26 | FY 2026-27 | FY 2027-28 |
| NCP Mobility Program | \$8.17m | | |
| NCP Semester Program | \$23.76m | | |
| NCP Scholarship Program | \$3.413m | \$15.925m | \$3.413m |
| Total | \$35.343m | | |

The remaining funding in the NCP's annual budget appropriation will cover NCP scholars from previous rounds who continue their programs in 2025-26, as well as administrative support expenses for program delivery.

The amount for an NCP Semester grant is up to \$15,000 per student for a one-semester project, and up to \$24,000 per student for a two-semester project. In addition, program support and administration funding totalling 20 per cent of the awarded student grant value will be provided to universities as outlined in section 5.2.2. The maximum total value of a one-semester grant inclusive of administrative funding will be \$18,000 and a two-semester grant will be \$28,800. DFAT anticipates supporting up to 1,000 students undertaking one semester-length experiences and 200 students undertaking two semester-length experiences under the Semester Program.

See sections 4 and 5 for eligibility requirements.

3.2 Grant period

The minimum duration of a project is ten weeks (70 calendar days).

The maximum project duration is two consecutive semesters.

Participating students must have returned to Australia by the end of the Semester program term (that is, by 31 July 2028).

4 Eligibility criteria

DFAT will only consider applications that satisfy all the eligibility criteria.

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

Only Australian universities are eligible to apply for funding through the NCP Semester Program.

Australian universities may submit consortium applications (see section 7.3). You must not apply for funding for the same project in the same round through both an individual and a consortium application.

4.2 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- an organisation, or your project partner is an organisation, included in the National Redress Scheme's website on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme' (www.nationalredress.gov.au).

4.3 Student eligibility

You must ensure each student receiving a student grant:

- a) is an Australian citizen
- b) is not, while participating in the project, a citizen or permanent resident of the proposed host location/s
- c) is, while participating in the project, enrolled or receiving credit towards studies in an Australian onshore campus and undertaking an undergraduate course
- d) will receive credit for completion of the project or have it count towards the completion requirements for the student's course (as in section 5.1b) at an Australian university
- e) is at least 18 years of age prior to participating in the project and meets the age requirements set out in section 4.4
- f) is not an employee of the branch of DFAT that administers the NCP, or the contractor
- g) does not:
 - (i) receive more than one NCP student grant for the same project
 - (ii) receive more than two NCP student grants (Mobility or Semester Program) during the course of their undergraduate study
 - (iii) participate in another offshore scholarship or project while participating in an NCP project, unless otherwise approved by DFAT.
- h) 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 10.3), and has completed DFAT's online NCP pre-departure training modules
- i) has signed an acknowledgement that they have read NCP Student Code of Conduct prior to their departure, and
- j) takes into account the [Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector](#).

4.4 Age requirements

You must ensure at least 70 per cent of students participating in a project and receiving a student grant are aged between 18 and 28 years inclusive at the commencement of the project.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students do not need to be aged between 18 and 28, and for the purposes of calculating the 70 per cent of students, are to be counted as students aged under age 28, recognising that a high proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students are mature aged students.

If you cannot fill places on a project due to these age requirements, you may apply to DFAT for an exemption to these age requirements prior to the project commencing. We will consider:

- the demonstrated inability to recruit students within the relevant age requirements
- the steps you have taken to meet this requirement, and
- whether the home university has a high proportion of mature age students.

5 What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible grant activities

NCP Semester Program funding may only be used for student grants and administration costs for an approved project, as outlined in this section.

Australian universities can apply for funding for projects that meet the following criteria:

- a) include at least one of the following components:
 - (i) study
 - (ii) in-location face-to-face language study
 - (iii) internships (including clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies)
 - (iv) research.
- b) provide credit or otherwise count towards the course completion requirements for the student's undergraduate course (see Glossary for definition of 'undergraduate course')
- c) must be undertaken in an eligible host location (see section 5.5.1)
- d) must not be undertaken at an offshore campus of a university established or headquartered outside the host location, with the exception of Australian offshore campuses that are able to offer a genuinely immersive experience, and
- e) must not breach DFAT's Safeguard Principles, as set out in section 5.9.

If a project includes activities focused on scientific exchange or research, the home and host institutions/organisations should familiarise themselves with Australia's export control regimes.

Similarly, the [Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector](#) are foundational elements essential for building resilience within a university in response to foreign interference and should be applied proportionate to the risk at each institution.

5.2 Eligible expenditure

5.2.1 Student grants

Eligible students participating in a project will each receive a student grant as outlined below. The student grant is intended to contribute, in the first instance, to the cost of a student's international travel and in-location living expenses during the project.

In the Project Description of your application, you should include a draft budget which breaks down the expected costs of student participation and the NCP Semester grant amount requested.

The grant amounts are as follows:

- up to \$15,000 per student for participation in a project of at least one semester
- up to \$24,000 per student for participation in a project of two consecutive semesters

You may request to provide a higher student grant to a student who incurs additional travel costs, for example travel from a rural/remote location to the departure city for international travel. Higher student grants may also be provided for the provision of reasonable accommodations for students with disability.

You may use funding for student grants to make group travel arrangements (and not pay all funding directly to students), where there is a benefit for the students (such as discounts through group bookings). In such cases, students must provide written consent to part of their grant not being paid directly to them. You must retain evidence of this. Universities must ensure appropriate refund provisions and insurance arrangements are made.

You may pay a student the grant in tranches, as determined by you.

You must not use student grant funding for administration costs.

You should apply for the number of student grants that you can reasonably expect to deliver within the 2026 round project term, taking into consideration any unused student grants you hold from previous rounds.

DFAT may offer less funding for a successful project than the amount sought by a university in its application. The grant offered may depend on, for example, the applicant university's implementation of funding from previous NCP rounds.

5.2.2 Program support and administration funding

All recipients of NCP Semester Program funding will receive program support and administration funding (20 per cent of total student grants for the project) to support their role in the NCP.

Program support and administration funding may be used to assist universities in developing and expanding Indo-Pacific course offerings, in particular those with a focus on Asian language and expanding or creating partnership arrangements with host institutions. Funding may also be used for general administration costs in managing the NCP Semester grant. These activities/costs may include, but are not limited to:

- activities to incentivise the offering of Indo-Pacific capability-related courses, especially in Asian languages
- partnership development, particularly in relation to developing new exchange/partnership arrangements in host locations
- development of new or sustaining consortium arrangements to maximise student participation in Indo-Pacific course offerings, especially Asian language offerings
- initiatives to promote the study of Asian languages and Indo-Pacific course offerings
- contributions to learning abroad staffing costs, especially to support expertise to service new or expanded exchange/partnership arrangements
- additional support to increase diverse student participation
- initiatives to raise the quality of the experiences (including risk management and critical incident planning for the project)
- planning, arranging, and negotiating the project
- supervising, monitoring and evaluating students' progress during the project, noting that core academic staff salaries are not eligible costs

- purchasing the services of third party providers with relevant expertise and appropriate systems to support students to undertake the project.

Universities must retain adequate records of administration funding expenditure and be able to provide these on request. Universities must return unspent administration funding to DFAT (together with unspent semester grant funding) once an NCP semester project is completed and financially acquitted.

If a semester project has been completed/expired without any student grants being expended, you must return all administration funding to DFAT, or provide, for DFAT approval, a detailed explanation as to how the funding was used to attempt to meet program outcomes. If you do not use all student grants under a project, you may only retain administration funding equivalent to 20 per cent of grants paid to students who did travel.

5.3 What the grant money cannot be used for

You cannot use the grant for the following activities:

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

5.4 Semester Program partnerships

We encourage you to develop partnerships with organisations in Australia and the region to maximise opportunities for NCP-funded students and participating institutions to build linkages and develop lasting relationships that support the aims of the NCP. For example:

- financial sponsorship (a cash contribution) from a private sector organisation
- language training provided by community language schools in Australia prior to and/or after travel
- in-kind sponsorship through the provision of goods or services free of charge for use in the project (that otherwise would have incurred a fee). This may include private sector organisations providing students access to resources or learning and development opportunities.

NCP Semester Program partnerships should contribute to achieving the NCP's strategic objective. They may not include contributions provided by Australian universities, host institutions, or service providers (paid a fee for supporting elements of a project).

5.5 Eligible host locations

5.5.1 Host locations

Subject to sections 2.4(j) and 5.6, projects must be conducted only in the following host locations:

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

5.5.2 Primary host location

A primary host location is the host location for which the project is awarded. Most of the duration of a project must be undertaken in the primary host location.

5.5.3 Secondary host location

Components of a project may not be undertaken in a secondary host location. If a university proposes to deliver the same or a similar semester experience in different host locations, separate applications must be submitted for each.

5.6 Travel requirements

The first travel by a student as part of the proposed project should commence by 1 May 2027. If student travel is not able to commence by that date, you should not apply for a grant under the 2026 NCP Semester round, however are still welcome to apply for any future NCP Semester Program rounds.

You (and participating students) are responsible for travel arrangements, including:

- a) accessing information about and addressing the risks
- b) obtaining comprehensive insurance that covers the host locations students will visit, their activities and any pre-existing medical conditions)
- c) reading and subscribing to relevant advice on [Smartraveller](#)
- d) obtaining travel medical advice prior to commencing travel, including necessary vaccinations and advice on pre-existing medical conditions, and
- e) ensuring appropriate visas are obtained and visa conditions are met during the project.

Participating students must not travel to or remain in a host location or region within a host location for which the Smartraveller advice is 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' (see section 2.4j).

5.7 Travel risks

In designing your project, you must carefully consider the risks of travel to all proposed host locations and regions. You must ensure strategies and services are in place to support student welfare and safety (see section 2.4). You must advise participating students to make their own enquiries about the risks involved in overseas travel, including to the host location, and to ensure they remain fully informed about the risks at all times.

Home universities are responsible for student welfare and safety. Home universities must be aware of and comply with their obligations under any applicable workplace health and safety legislation. Similarly, organisations who provide NCP internships will likely incur work health and safety duty of care responsibilities. You must ensure that student travel risk assessment and risk management plans address all risks identified in the host location advisory published on Smartraveller.

5.8 Host institutions

Projects must not be undertaken at an offshore campus of a university established or headquartered outside the host location (for example, an offshore campus of a third location university), with the exception of Australian offshore campuses that are able to offer a genuinely immersive experience (section 5.1d).

5.9 Safeguard Principles

Universities must comply with, and ensure students and host organisations comply with, the principles outlined in DFAT's [Child Protection Policy](#), [Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#) and [Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy](#).

Projects must not cause harm including injury or injustice to any person that a project is intended to engage with or assist, or to their wider communities or environment.

6 The assessment criteria

6.1 Priority areas for selection

All NCP programs must be conducted only in the host locations at section 5.5.1. As outlined in section 2.2.1, preference during selection processes for the 2026 NCP Semester Program will be given to the following:

- Projects that will be undertaken in the priority host locations, languages and sectors outlined in the table below. These areas are consistent with Australia's foreign policy priorities for engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, including as outlined in [Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040](#) and [A New Roadmap for Australia's Economic Engagement with India](#). These priorities will be reviewed annually. Applicants may still submit applications for other NCP host locations (listed in section 5.5.1), languages and sectors. Where eligible, these applications will be assessed on their merits in accordance with the assessment criteria at section 6.2.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Priority Host Locations | Of the eligible NCP host locations, applications to the following locations where Australia wishes to expand linkages will be prioritised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India Indonesia Timor-Leste Vietnam |
| | Applications for the following host locations, where Australia wants to maintain its strong, existing engagement, will also be considered highly favourably: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> China Fiji Japan Republic of Korea Malaysia Singapore The Philippines Taiwan Thailand |
| Priority Asian Languages | The Australian Government is committed to building Australia's Indo-Pacific capabilities and deepening Asia literacy, including in languages. Applications that demonstrate a focus on learning the following Asian languages will be prioritised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bahasa Indonesia Malay Chinese (Mandarin) Hindi Japanese Korean Vietnamese |
| Priority Sectors | Australia's prosperity, security and economic future is tied to the Indo-Pacific region. Applications demonstrating a relationship to the following sectors will be a priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economics and Business Environment, Primary Industries and Natural Resources Infrastructure, Climate and Energy Law, Asian Studies, Culture, and Human Development Technology and Innovation |

- Projects where the main focus is for the study of a priority language. In the 2026 round, all NCP programs will have a language target set at 15 per cent. This target builds on the language stream introduced in the 2025 NCP Mobility and Scholarships Programs. For Australian university undergraduate students awarded the NCP Semester Program, one of the following two criteria will apply to meet the language target:
 - 50 per cent or more of the planned study program, to be delivered by the host institution and approved by students' Australian home universities for credit towards their Australian home degree, is delivered in an official or commonly spoken language (other than English) of an eligible primary NCP host location where the host institution is located, via face-to-face mode, or
 - 50 per cent or more of the planned study program, approved by students' Australian home universities for credit towards their Australian home degree, is to study the official or commonly spoken language (other than English) of an eligible primary NCP host location where the host institution is located, via face-to-face mode.

6.2 Assessment criteria

In your application you will need to provide detailed input in the Project Description and four Selection Criteria. Please note that a 300-word limit applies to each field as specified in the application template. For applications to be assessed as suitable, responses to each criterion must receive at least a satisfactory rating.

In the Project Description of the application, the applicant should outline:

- the activities participating students will undertake
- how the project will be delivered (including any use of a third party provider)
- justification for the proposed cost per student (value with relevant money) including an indicative budget
- whether/how the project addresses a priority area for selection.

Criterion 1:

Alignment of proposal with the Australian Government's geographic and sectoral priorities in the Indo-Pacific region

Weighting: 40 per cent

You should demonstrate this by:

- a) describing how the project aligns with Australia's regional priorities, include how the Indo-Pacific capability of participating students will be developed, and/or
- b) describing how the project will contribute to Australia's sectoral priorities and the linkages that will be established.

Criterion 2:

Focus on priority languages

Weighting: 20 per cent

You should demonstrate this by:

- a) describing the extent to which the project focuses on and will build proficiency in an Indo-Pacific language, especially in a priority Asian language.

Criterion 3:

Quality of the proposal

Weighting: 30 per cent

You should demonstrate this by:

- a) describing how the Project Support and Administration funding will be used to develop and expand Indo-Pacific course offerings, with a focus on Priority Asian Languages, consortium arrangements, and development partnerships with host institutions
- b) describing how the project relates to existing course content and how the project will build Indo-Pacific capability, including in language
- c) describing how quality will be assured, and outcomes will be evaluated
- d) describing how risks will be managed throughout the project.

Criterion 4:

Potential to maintain engagement with the Indo-Pacific region

Weighting: 10 per cent

You should demonstrate this by:

- a) describing agreements in place, particularly new and innovative partnership arrangements, with host institutions and proposed joint activities
- b) outlining the plan for maintaining those links beyond the term of the project.

If the project is being undertaken at an Australian transnational education presence in the Indo-Pacific, the application must demonstrate how the project will be a genuinely immersive experience.

7 How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines. The guidelines may be found at [GrantConnect](#). GrantConnect is the authoritative source for Australian Government grants information. Any alterations or addenda³ will be published on GrantConnect. By registering on GrantConnect, individuals will be notified automatically of any changes.

To apply you must:

- apply for funding and accept/decline funding through the International Student Exchange Online portal (ISEO). Only the applicant's nominated NCP International Liaison Officer (ILO) can submit an application in ISEO.
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
- include all necessary attachments, and
- submit your application/s to ISEO by the closing time.

³ 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.

7.1 Application process

You must enter the following details for each project into the application form in ISEO:

- a) host location and primary city, field of study, whether the project is a new or existing project (and the existing project number if applicable), the length of study and whether the application is a consortium application
- b) title and description of the project (including whether the project involves travel to a secondary location), project type, qualification level, indicative travel dates, project partner(s), third party providers, and partnership details
- c) confirmation that the project meets the eligibility criteria
- d) a contact point for the project (usually the academic or officer leading the project)
- e) responses to the assessment criteria
- f) total funding sought for student grants
- g) the number of students to participate in the project
- h) declarations that:
 - the person submitting the application has the authority to do so
 - the application complies with the home university's quality assurance processes
 - all funded projects will be implemented, and funding will be expended and reported in accordance with these guidelines and the grant agreement
 - financial support received from the Australian Government will be acknowledged in all publications, promotional materials and activities
 - you have appropriate strategies and services in place to support student welfare and safety (see section 2.4)
 - you can demonstrate an approach to increasing participation by 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, students who are first in their immediate family to attend university, students across genders, female students studying in non-traditional fields, students with disability, and students from a non-English speaking background
 - if any personal details of a student or other third party are included in an application or otherwise provided to the Australian Government as part of the project, the student or other third party has given written consent for the collection, use and disclosure of those details for this purpose, and
 - you acknowledge that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code Act 1995 \(Cth\)](#).

You are responsible for ensuring the application is complete and accurate. An application may be excluded from consideration, offers revoked or a project terminated if DFAT reasonably believes that false or misleading information has formed a component of an application. Further terms relating to the termination or cancellation of a project are set out in the Grant Agreement.

If you find an error in the application after submitting it, email DFAT immediately at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au. DFAT does not have to accept additional information, or requests from you to correct your application after the closing time.

If DFAT finds an error or that information is missing, it may seek clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of the application. DFAT will not accept additional information after the closing time.

ISEO will automatically generate an email to acknowledge receipt of an application. You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

7.2 Attachments to the application

In addition to completing the application form on ISEO, we require you to submit a letter of support from the project partner. with your application. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

7.3 Joint (consortium) applications

We recognise that some universities may want to join together as a group to deliver a project. A university may submit an application on behalf of a consortium of universities. In these circumstances, you must appoint a 'lead applicant'. Only the lead applicant can submit the application form and enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group.

If a consortium application is selected, the lead applicant will be required to enter into a grant agreement and will be accountable for meeting legal and reporting requirements on behalf of the consortium. The lead applicant must have a formal arrangement in place with all participating universities prior to execution of the grant agreement.

You must not apply for funding for the same project in the same round through both an individual and a consortium application.

7.4 Timing of grant opportunity processes

Applications must be submitted between the opening and closing dates. We cannot accept late applications.

Key dates in the selection and implementation of projects are outlined below. DFAT may amend these dates at any time by posting a notice on GrantConnect.

Table: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

| Activity | Indicative Timeframe |
|---|---------------------------|
| Applications open | 12 August 2025 |
| Applications close at 11.30pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) | 23 September 2025 |
| Assessment of applications | September – November 2025 |
| Approval of outcomes of selection process | December 2025 |
| Distribution of grant agreements | December 2025 |
| Notification to unsuccessful applicants | December 2025 |
| Project start | 1 January 2026 |
| Project end | 31 July 2028 |

Funding offers to successful applicants will be made prior to the beginning of the project term

7.5 Questions during the application process

Please direct any questions during the application period to the NCP Secretariat at ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au. Where relevant, responses will be posted on GrantConnect.

The NCP Secretariat will not respond to questions received after **5.00pm AEST on 16 September 2025**.

8 The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of grant applications

DFAT will not accept late applications. DFAT (and/or the contractor) will review each application for compliance with eligibility requirements (section 4 and 5.1).

We consider eligible applications through an open competitive grant process. Your application will be assessed on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the assessment criteria (section 6)
- how it compares to other applications, and
- whether it provides value with money.

As outlined in section 2.2.1 and section 6.1 in assessment of grant applications, priority will be given to projects:

- that will be undertaken in the priority host locations, languages and sectors in the table in section 6.1, and
- whose main focus is for the study of a priority language.

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

- the overall objectives to be achieved in providing the grant
- the relative value of the grant sought
- the extent to which the geographic location of the application matches identified priorities
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the NCP strategic objective and outcomes, and
- how the grant activities will target groups or individuals.

8.2 Who will assess applications?

Each eligible application will be assessed by two independent assessors experienced in assessing Commonwealth grant applications or similar processes managed by the Commonwealth. Assessors are required/expected to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRPs.

DFAT's NCP Secretariat and/or its contractor will moderate assessors' recommendations for consistency, taking into account:

- the NCP strategic objective and Australian foreign policy considerations
- the range and diversity of host locations, fields of study, home universities and partners
- the number of students expected to participate and the duration of projects
- the applicants' track record in expending NCP funding, implementing projects without variations, and reporting on previous NCP projects.

The NCP Secretariat will present these recommendations to the Program Delegate (section 8.3).

The selection process may be used to determine a merit list of suitable projects, from which future funding offers may be made.

DFAT reserves the right to offer partial funding of a grant application.

8.3 Who will approve grants?

The NCP Program Delegate (DFAT's First Assistant Secretary responsible for the NCP), will decide which applications will be funded, taking into account recommendations of assessors and the NCP Secretariat, Australian foreign policy considerations and the availability of funds.

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

- approval of the grant
- grant funding amount to be awarded, and
- terms and conditions of the grant.

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

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

9 Notification of application outcomes

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing (via email). If you are successful, we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

An offer, once made, is final. DFAT will not enter into negotiations about a funding offer.

9.1 Feedback on your application

Individual feedback will not be provided to applicants. If your application is unsuccessful, you may submit a new application for the same (or similar) project in any subsequent NCP rounds. A subsequent application will be assessed on its merits based on the guidelines for that round.

10 Successful grant applications

10.1 Accepting an offer

We will send you a letter of agreement advising that your application has been successful and providing you with an offer. Your nominated NCP ILO must accept or decline the offer through ISEO by the date specified in the offer.

10.2 The grant agreement

Following acceptance of the offer, and prior to commencing the project, you must enter into a legally binding grant agreement (governed by the Deed for Student Mobility Programs executed between DFAT and individual Australian universities for Student Mobility Programs 2025-27) with the Commonwealth of Australia, represented by DFAT. The grant agreement will cover all NCP grants awarded to you. The grant agreement has terms and conditions that cannot be changed and requires you to comply with the guidelines of the round through which you applied for funding.

In the event of any inconsistency between the grant agreement and these guidelines, the grant guidelines will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

If you start a project before you have an executed grant agreement, you do so at your own risk. You are responsible for any expenditure you make before a grant agreement is executed.

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

10.3 Specific legislation, policies and industry standards

You must comply with, and ensure NCP participants comply with, all relevant Australian and local laws and regulations, in Australia and in host locations when undertaking a project. This includes compliance with laws in relation to child protection and preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH).

DFAT does not tolerate sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment. This applies within DFAT and extends to those we work with including students and partner universities. Universities must, and ensure NCP participants 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 sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment seriously. NCP participants also have an obligation to comply with their university's policies on child protection and PSEAH.

You must take into account the [Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector](#).

10.4 How DFAT pays the grant

The contractor will pay the grant in accordance with the grant agreement, which is governed by the Deed for Student Mobility Programs executed between DFAT and individual Australian universities.

The grant agreement will state the maximum grant amount to be paid. We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

Before grants payments can be made you must submit to DFAT a valid tax invoice for the amount of grant offered. The contractor may elect to issue a [Recipient Created Tax Invoice](#).

10.5 Grants payments and GST

Payments will be GST Exclusive.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by Australian taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#).⁴ Neither DFAT nor its contractor provide taxation advice.

11 Announcement of grants

DFAT may publicly announce approved NCP projects including, but not limited to:

- the title of the project, their Australian university and host institution(s)
- the description of study areas and internships/mentorships (and their timing), and
- the amount of funding awarded.

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website no later than twenty-one calendar days after the date of effect as required by section 5.4 of the [CGRPs](#).

12 How DFAT monitors your grant activity

12.1 Keeping DFAT informed

You should advise DFAT or the contractor of any adverse circumstances affecting the implementation of the NCP project, in accordance with the grant agreement.

You must also inform DFAT or the contractor of any changes to your:

- name
- address
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

⁴ <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

12.2 Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. A completion report (following the template in ISEO) for each project, must be submitted no later than four weeks after the return of the last student, and must include:

- a statement declaring that all funding has been spent in accordance with the grant agreement and, if applicable, any unspent amounts that will be returned to DFAT
- the number of students who participated in the project and the amount of funding paid to each student as a student grant
- information on the efforts undertaken by the university to recoup and return grant funding (from service providers, students, and insurers, if applicable) when students are unable to complete their program
- the actual amount of administration funding used, including a breakdown of this expenditure
- key achievements against the NCP strategic objective and outcomes, including project-specific information on activities undertaken and linkages established, and
- student diversity groups.

You may also provide:

- feedback received about the project, including from participants
- photographs and links to any articles, social media, and media coverage produced (as attachments).

12.3 Varying a Semester project

The NCP is a competitive grants program. NCP semester grants are grant funding and thereby governed by rules applicable to the use of Commonwealth grants funds. After an offer is accepted, requests to vary a semester project will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and on a case-by-case basis. Universities should prioritise the delivery of semester projects as originally proposed and funded. You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on provisions in the grant agreement and the likely impact on achieving outcomes.

If requesting a variation, the home university must justify why the project could not be delivered as set out in the application and must outline firm plans to implement the project. Requests must be submitted at least four weeks in advance of any planned student travel.

DFAT will not approve variation requests that it considers to constitute a new project proposal, or which are substantively different from the approved project.

A request to vary a project will only be considered if the variation is:

- consistent with the strategic objective and outcomes of the NCP and these guidelines
- as close as is reasonable to the original approved project as in the application, and
- consistent with the requirements regarding use of Australian Government funding including the CGRPs, the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (Cth)* ('PGPA Act') and any other relevant governing policies for the disbursement of Australian Government grants funding.

You are responsible for any commitments you make in relation to a proposed variation prior to receipt of formal advice of approval of a variation.

If you cannot proceed with a project in accordance with the application, and no variation is approved, DFAT may withdraw a funding offer and/or request that funding be returned.

You should only apply for funding that you have firm plans to deliver within the project term. DFAT will monitor the frequency with which a university applies to vary projects.

12.4 Sharing NCP stories

You should retain photographs, online articles and/or links and other media coverage documenting the project, to be provided on request to the NCP Secretariat. You may send material to the NCP Secretariat (ncp.communications@dfat.gov.au) at any time.

Before providing images, videos or audio recordings, or personal information to the Australian Government, you must obtain consent from NCP participants and advise them that the Australian Government may collect, use, disclose and publish their personal information including in accordance with section 13.4.

12.5 Compliance visits

We may visit you during or at the completion of your grant activity to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

12.6 Record keeping

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the Deed and relevant Project Schedule.

12.7 Evaluation

We evaluate how well the NCP Semester Program is achieving its objective and outcomes. We may use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may request information on the achievements of the project to inform evaluation of how effectively it contributed to the objective and outcomes of the NCP. Information on the project may be used to promote the NCP.

Program stakeholders, including project partners and students, may be asked to participate in the evaluation of the NCP Semester Program.

12.8 Acknowledgement

Where possible, the NCP program logo should be used on all materials related to grants under the program. Whenever the logo is used, the publication must also acknowledge the Commonwealth as follows: 'New Colombo Plan Semester Program – an Australian Government initiative'.

The NCP logo can be found at <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/resources/Pages/logos-and-branding>, and should be used in accordance with the New Colombo Plan Brand Guidelines.

If use of the NCP logo is not possible, use the following wording: 'This [name of grant activity or project/services] received grant funding from the Australian Government.'

13 Probity

The Australian Government will ensure that the grant opportunity process is fair, is conducted according to the published grant opportunity guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud and corruption, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct, and is consistent with the CGRPs.

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. The scheme requires registration of certain activities that are undertaken in Australia on behalf of a foreign principal, for the purpose of political or government influence. It is recommended that you review obligations and responsibilities under the scheme at <https://www.ag.gov.au/integrity/foreign-influence-transparency-scheme> before establishing project partners. Enquiries about the scheme should be sent to transparency@ag.gov.au.

DFAT may change these guidelines from time-to-time. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on GrantConnect. By registering on this website, you will be automatically notified of any changes to these guidelines. DFAT will advise home universities of any supplementary requirements relating to the implementation of approved NCP projects.

You should be aware of your obligations under the [National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022](#), noting that under the Act grantees will generally be considered 'contracted service providers' (see <https://www.nacc.gov.au/resource-centre/nacc-fact-sheets>).

13.1 Enquiries and feedback

Please send any questions or complaints about grant decisions for this grant opportunity to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au. All complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing.

If you do not agree with the way that DFAT has handled your complaint, you may refer the matter to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually consider a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the DFAT.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

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

13.2 Fraud and Corruption

DFAT does not tolerate inaction to fraud or corruption. This applies within DFAT and extends to those we work with. Universities must have appropriate fraud and corruption controls in place relating to the NCP Semester Program. Specific fraud and corruption obligations for Australian universities are set out in relevant grant agreements. 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](#).

Australian universities, NCP project participants, third party providers and partner organisations 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
- For fraud or corruption by DFAT staff: Conduct@dfat.gov.au
- All other fraud or corruption relation to the NCP Program: via [webform](#), or fraud.corruption@dfat.gov.au

To avoid any scams, applicants should obtain official information about the NCP Program from DFAT or its contractor or from <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan>.

13.3 Conflict of Interest

Any conflicts of interest, or perceived conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the NCP program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if DFAT/the contractor's staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel has:

- a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer, employee of the contractor or member of an external assessment panel
- a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict you from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently, or
- a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform DFAT in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff are 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 declare any conflicts of interest.

13.4 Privacy

DFAT manages the NCP Semester Program with the support of contractors it engages to deliver the NCP. DFAT and its contractors are bound by the provisions of the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Privacy Act), including the [Australian Privacy Principles](#) (APPs) which regulate how personal information can be handled.

The below notice provides you with important information about how DFAT and its contractors will handle personal information through the NCP Semester Program.

Why might personal information be collected?

If your organisation applies for funding through the NCP Semester Program, the personal information of your staff will be collected by DFAT and its contractors for the purpose of managing, promoting and evaluating the NCP.

If your application is successful, you will be required to provide personal information of your students to DFAT and its contractors for the purpose of managing, promoting and evaluating the NCP. Their personal information may also be used in media releases, publications and in public relations activities, including on the internet, to promote the NCP and other Australian Government programs or activities.

Their personal information may also be used to contact them after the completion of their NCP Semester Program, to follow up on their experiences and achievements and how their participation in the NCP may have contributed to this.

What types of personal information and sensitive information will need to be collected?

Below are examples of the personal information (and sensitive information) DFAT or its contractors may collect about students:

- name and contact details
- gender
- date of birth
- diversity information, and
- the personal information (including sensitive information) set out in any of the matters dealt with above at section 7.1 of these guidelines.

What happens if we do not collect this personal information?

If DFAT or its contractors requests any of the information above, unless you provide it we may not be able to:

- assess your application/s for the NCP Semester Program
- undertake administration and performance monitoring and evaluation of the NCP
- promote the NCP, including in promotional material, information and publications in hardcopy and/or the internet, and
- invite NCP students and alumni to relevant functions and events held in Australia and overseas.

Who will student personal information be disclosed to?

If you are approved for funding under the NCP Semester Program, DFAT and its contractors may disclose your personal information to third parties for the purpose of managing, promoting or evaluating the NCP. For example, your personal information may be disclosed to:

- other Australian Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Education and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- State and Territory Governments
- Australian Parliamentary members and committees of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia
- contractors and agents of DFAT, the Department of Education and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- Australian Universities, including to the NCP International Liaison Officers
- potential internship/mentorship host organisations and 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 jurisdictions)
- media representatives, including foreign media representatives.

Applicants must ensure that their students are aware and provide express consent for their personal information to be handled as set out in this notice, including being disclosed to overseas recipients listed above – that is, individuals or entities who are not in Australia – for the purpose of managing, promoting or evaluating the NCP. This includes ensuring students are aware that if they provide their consent, they acknowledge and agree that Australian Privacy Principle 8.1 will not apply to the disclosure and that they understand DFAT will not take any steps to ensure that an overseas recipient does not breach an Australian Privacy Principle under the Privacy Act.

As part of your application, you must declare your ability to comply with the Privacy Act and the APPs and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to implement the project, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the NCP Semester Program. Accordingly, you must not do anything which, if done by DFAT, would breach an APP as defined in the Act.

DFAT's [Privacy Policy](#) contains information about DFAT's collection, use, disclosure and storage of personal information, including sensitive information, and how individuals may:

- a) access and correct personal information that we hold; or
- b) 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, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than DFAT, any Confidential Information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

DFAT may at any time, require you to arrange for you, or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

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

- a) you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- b) the information is commercially sensitive
- c) revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

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

- the NCP Secretariat and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the NCP Semester Program effectively, including for an integrity purpose
- DFAT's employees and contractors so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman, Privacy Commissioner or National Anti-Corruption Commissioner, or staff of their agencies
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, or
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant 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](#) (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 exemptions outlined in the FOI Act.

All FOI requests must be made to DFAT's FOI Director 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

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| 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. |
| Administering entity | the entity that is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes. |
| Assessment criteria | are the specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings. |
| Australian university | a registered higher education provider for the purposes of the <i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth)</i> that is registered in an “Australian University” category. |
| Closing date/time | the date and time beyond which applications will not be accepted, as specified in section 7.4. |
| Commencement date | the expected start date for the grant activity. |
| Commonwealth entity | a Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (Cth)</i> . |
| Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024 (CGRPs) | 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. |
| Completion date | the expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by. |
| Confidential information | information that satisfies criteria at section 13.5, or that the Australian Government designates as confidential, or that either party knows or ought to know is confidential. Does not include information otherwise in the public domain. |

| Term | Definition |
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| Conflict of interest | real, apparent or potential private or personal associations or interests (financial or non-financial) which improperly influence, or may improperly influence, an applicant's performance of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the NCP Semester Program. |
| Contracted service provider (the contractor) | <p>DFAT's Managed Administration and Support Services contractor for the NCP.</p> <p>a contracted service provider is a person who is a party to a Commonwealth contract or is a party to a subcontract with a contracted service provider and is responsible for the provision of goods or services under contract, either directly or indirectly.</p> |
| Consortium | a group of Australian universities that has appointed a lead applicant to submit an application. |
| Date of effect | can be the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable. |
| Decision maker | the person who decides to award a grant. |
| Disability | any limitation, restriction or impairment that restricts everyday activities or assistance is required and has lasted or is likely to last for at least six months. |
| Eligibility criteria | refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Eligibility criteria should be developed to enable objective validation and are either 'met' or 'not met'. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria. |
| Foreign Arrangements Scheme | the Foreign Arrangements Scheme is administered by DFAT to implement <i>Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020 (Cth)</i> . |
| Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme | the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme is administered by the Attorney-General's Department to implement the <i>Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018 (Cth)</i> . |
| 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 (Different term). |

| Term | Definition |
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| Grant | <p>for the purposes of the CGRPs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. under which relevant money⁵ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money⁶ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives. |
| Grant activity/activities | the project that the grantee is required to undertake. |
| Grant agreement | sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant. |
| GrantConnect | is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs. |
| Grant opportunity | refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process. |
| 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 single DFAT Portfolio Budget Statement Program. |
| Grantee | the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant. |
| Home university | the Australian university at which the relevant student is enrolled throughout the duration of the project in which they are participating. |
| Host institution | a university or other education provider where students are enrolled for study in the host location as part of an NCP project. |
| Host location | the geographic location in the Indo-Pacific, as listed in section 5.5.1, in which students undertake projects. |

⁵ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

⁶ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

| Term | Definition |
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| Host organisation | any other organisation, besides the host institution that may host students for work, training, study or research in the host location as part of the project. Excludes offshore campuses of universities established or headquartered outside the host location, with the exception of Australian offshore campuses that are able to offer a genuinely immersive experience. |
| Internship | a work experience in which a student has learning goals relevant to their academic course and professional development. Internships can include clinical placements, practicums or artist residencies. |
| ISEO or International Student Exchange Online | DFAT's online system for managing applications. |
| Language target | <p>for Australian university undergraduate students awarded the NCP Semester Program, one of the following two criteria will apply to meet the language target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 per cent or more of the planned study program, to be delivered by the host institution and approved by scholars' Australian home universities for credit towards their Australian home degree, is delivered in an official or commonly spoken language (other than English) of an eligible primary NCP host location where the host institution is located, via face-to-face mode, or • 50 per cent or more of the planned study program, approved by students' Australian home universities for credit towards their Australian home degree, is to study the official or commonly spoken language (other than English) of an eligible primary NCP host location where the host institution is located, via face-to-face mode. |
| Law | <p>any applicable statute, regulation, by-law, ordinance or subordinate legislation in force from time to time in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Australia, whether made by a State, Territory, the Commonwealth, or a local government; and (b) the jurisdiction in which the project is being undertaken. |
| Lead applicant | the Australian university submitting an application and meeting reporting requirements on behalf of a consortium. |
| Low Socio-Economic Status (SES) | students who are from a low SES 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. |

| Term | Definition |
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| Mentorship | a developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person, relevant to work, career, or professional development. |
| Private Sector Partnership | a financial or in-kind arrangement between one or more home universities or consortium and at least one Private Sector Organisation that meets the requirements in section 5.4. |
| Program Term | 1 January 2026 to 31 July 2028. |
| Project | a project that meets the eligibility requirements at section 5.1 for which you seek funding in accordance with these guidelines. |
| National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) | The National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) is an independent Commonwealth agency. It detects, investigates and reports on serious or systemic corruption in the Commonwealth public sector. The Commission operates under the National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022 . |
| New Colombo Plan (NCP) | the NCP Scholarship Program, NCP Semester Program, and NCP Mobility Program. |
| New Colombo Plan website | www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan |
| Offshore campus | of an Australian university refers to a branch campus in a location outside Australia. |
| Participation in Project | student's engagement with NCP project including but not limited to signing any agreements relating to NCP project and travelling on the NCP project. |
| 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. |
| Personal information | the meaning defined in the <i>Privacy Act</i> : "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 <i>Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</i> . |

| Term | Definition |
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| Private sector organisation | Australian, global and local commercial enterprises 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. |
| Project partner | the host institution(s), host organisation(s), and/or any other overseas or Australian partner organisation(s) involved in the delivery of a project. |
| Regional/remote | a region designated as Regional or Remote by the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard. |
| Secondary host location | the meaning in section 5.5.3. |
| Selection criteria | comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria. |
| Selection process | the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria. |
| Semester | the meaning as published by the host institution, provided it is a minimum of 10 weeks. Where the host institution operates trimesters rather than semesters, the trimester will be a Semester and must also be a minimum of 10 weeks. |
| Student | a student enrolled in an Australian university throughout the duration of the project. |
| Student Code of Conduct | the Student Code of Conduct outlines the expectations of students participating in NCP projects in respect of personal and professional behaviour. |
| Student grant | the meaning in section 5.2. |
| Third Party Provider | A service provider that has been paid a fee for supporting element/s of an NCP project. |
| Undergraduate course | As defined by the Department of Education in Higher Education Administrative Information for Providers , an undergraduate course of study is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. |

| Term | Definition |
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| Value with money | <p>value with money in this document refers to ‘value with relevant money’ which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of the project proposal and activities • fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives • that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government’s outcomes being achieved, and • the potential grantee’s relevant experience and performance history. |
| We / our / us | The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. |
| You / your | an Australian university applying for NCP Semester Program funding and, in the case of a consortium, the lead applicant. |