



New Colombo Plan Semester Program 2027 Round Guidelines

Opening date: 9 June 2026

Closing date and time: 11 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on
4 August 2026

**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 pm AEST on
21 July 2026

**Date grant opportunity
guidelines released:** 9 June 2026

Type of grant opportunity: Open competitive

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1 New Colombo Plan Semester Program: 2027 Round processes

The New Colombo Plan (NCP) Semester Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity is part of the NCP Semester Program, which contributes to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)'s Portfolio Budget Statement 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). DFAT works with stakeholders to plan, design and administer the grant program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024 \(CGRPs\)](#).



The NCP Semester Program grant opportunity opens

We publish the NCP Semester Program Guidelines on [GrantConnect](#).



You apply for a grant

You complete and submit your application form through [SmartyGrants](#) addressing all of the eligibility and assessment criteria.



Your application is assessed

We assess all grant applications against the eligibility and assessment criteria, including an overall consideration of value with relevant money and compare it to other applications.



Application assessments are reviewed and moderated

We review the assessments of applications by different assessors and moderate, as necessary.



We make grant recommendations

We provide advice to the decision maker on the merits of each application.



Grant decisions are made

The DFAT financial delegate decides which applications are successful.



We notify successful applicants of the outcome

We advise successful applicants of the outcome of their application.



We enter into grant agreements with successful applicants

We will enter into a grant agreement with you if your application is successful. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and will be proportional to the risks involved.



Delivery of grant

You implement the semester project as set out in the grant agreement. Our Program Support Services provider (the services provider) manages the grant by working with you, making payments and monitoring progress. The CGRPs are applied throughout the program, including in assessing

the validity of variations from the project set out in the grant application, which is the basis for a grant being awarded.



Evaluation of the NCP Semester Program

We evaluate semester 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 2027 Round of the NCP Semester Program, for the duration of any project awarded funding through this Round. You must read these grant opportunity guidelines before filling out an application. This document sets out:

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

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

For more information about the 2027 Round, see the NCP Semester Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the DFAT website.²

2 About the grant program

2.1 Strategic objective and outcomes of the NCP

The strategic objective of the NCP, as described in Program 1.5 of the 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

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L00854/latest/text>

² <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/new-colombo-plan-semester-program>

- 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 2027 Round, the NCP includes 3 programs:

- **Scholarship 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 1 to 2 semester-length experiences for students to develop Indo-Pacific capability, including language learning and internships.
- **Mobility Program:** short-term, credit-bearing experiences of 4–9 weeks to develop Indo-Pacific capability, including structured learning, internships, mentorships, practicums, and/or research.

To deepen Australia's Indo-Pacific capability and Asia literacy, the NCP has introduced a language learning target for the program. In the 2027 Round, the language target is 40 per cent for the NCP program as a whole. See Glossary (section 14) for more information on the language target criteria for the NCP Semester Program.

After their programs, NCP scholars and semester and mobility participants who have complied with all requirements of the NCP on completion of their program are invited to join the NCP alumni network. This network supports alumni to maintain connections to each other, the NCP and the Indo-Pacific as they progress in their 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, and
- 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 1 to 2 semester-length experiences for Australian undergraduate students to build their Indo-Pacific capability and Asia literacy, including Asian language learning. Credit-bearing internships and other programs that contribute to mandatory course completion can also be undertaken.

The 2027 NCP Semester Program will run from **1 January 2027 to 31 July 2029**. This extended project delivery period is designed for contingency planning. Applicants are strongly encouraged to only apply for funding for projects which are planned to commence prior to 1 May 2028.

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 Program Support Services provider (the services provider) to support the administration of the NCP Semester Program, including support to the selection process.

The services provider 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 services provider 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, and manage project risks, emergencies and safeguards. The services provider has established relationships with our partners overseas and home universities.

DFAT and/or its services provider 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 and are responsible for managing their NCP projects, including the welfare and safety of participating students.

Australian universities are responsible for:

1. Governance, Compliance and Legal Obligations

- a) ensuring the project complies with the home university's quality assurance processes
- b) ensuring the project is delivered as originally proposed, or that variations are sought only in exceptional circumstances and through a variation request before any student travel occurs
- c) taking into account the [Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector](#)³
- d) complying with 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.⁴ Universities must comply with these obligations in relation to the NCP Semester Program
- e) 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)*, and
- f) complying with all terms and conditions of the Deed for Student Mobility Programs executed between DFAT and individual Australian universities for Student Mobility Programs offered in the 2025-2027 Rounds.

³ <https://www.education.gov.au/countering-foreign-interference-australian-university-sector/resources/guidelines-counter-foreign-interference-australian-university-sector>

⁴ <https://www.foreignarrangements.gov.au>

2. Risk Management, Safety and Student Welfare

- a) being aware of [Smartraveller](#) travel advice and considering risks before applying⁵
- b) ensuring participating staff and students subscribe to Smartraveller prior to travelling overseas, and register on Smartraveller during crises
- c) ensuring no travel occurs to 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' locations
- d) ensuring appropriate risk management and safety precautions are in place, and uploading risk management and critical incident plans to [SmartyGrants](#) at least 4 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 services provider)
- e) requiring students to obtain travel medical advice and to have a plan to manage pre-existing conditions
- f) ensuring travel insurance is provided or obtained
- g) ensuring adequate support is in place at the host and home institutions
- h) ensuring participating staff, students and host institutions are aware of and comply with DFAT's [Child Protection Policy](#)⁶ and [Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#)⁷ (see sections 5.8 and 10.3)
- i) arranging pre-departure briefings and ensuring all participating students complete DFAT's online NCP pre-departure training modules, and
- j) ensuring students sign the [NCP Semester and Mobility Programs Participant Code of Conduct](#) acknowledgement prior to departure.⁸

3. Student Eligibility, Selection and Support

- a) ensuring students are eligible to participate and selected fairly, independently and transparently
- b) informing students of other funding available to assist with the cost of undertaking projects, such as OS-HELP
- c) ensuring students receive NCP pre-departure materials prior to departure, including the pre-departure letter, NCP Semester and Mobility Programs Participant Code of Conduct and [NCP Semester and Mobility Programs Media and Publication Guidelines](#)⁹
- d) ensuring students travel only using an Australian passport, obtain appropriate visas 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)
- e) ensuring students are advised about Australian Government handling of personal information under the NCP program (see sections 12.5, 13.4 and 13.5), and
- f) actively supporting participation from a diverse range of students, 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 the genders, women students studying in non-traditional fields, students with disability, and students from a non-English speaking background.

⁵ <https://www.smartraveller.gov.au>

⁶ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/child-protection/child-protection-policy>

⁷ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/protection-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment>

⁸ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/resources>

⁹ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/resources>

4. Project Management and Delivery

- a) managing NCP projects, including student welfare and safety
- b) ensuring the nominated NCP International Liaison Officer (ILO) and staff involved in delivery and oversight of NCP projects are kept informed of NCP communications
- c) ensuring indicative project travel dates are up-to-date in [SmartyGrants](#)
- d) entering student details into [SmartyGrants](#) at least 3 weeks before departure from Australia, including relevant diversity data as available
- e) issuing NCP Completion Certificates to students who have completed a project
- f) providing supplementary information to DFAT or the services provider, as requested to support NCP program promotion, monitoring and evaluation, and
- g) submitting satisfactory completion reports within 4 weeks of return to Australia.

5. Communications, Promotion and Stakeholder Engagement

- a) actively promoting the NCP and complying with the [NCP Semester and Mobility Programs Media and Publication Guidelines](#), and
- b) ensuring that staff remain informed of NCP updates.

3 Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants available

The NCP has a total appropriation of \$203.732 million over 4 years from 2026-27 to 2029-30 (annual appropriation of \$50.933 million). A total of \$36.594 million is available for NCP grant funding for the 2026-27 financial year for the 2027 Round. It is anticipated that up to \$23.500 million in funding will be available for the NCP Semester Program in 2026-27, including 20 per cent program support and administration funding for Australian universities. Expenditure related to the NCP Scholarship Program 2027 Round will be expensed over 3 financial years.

Table 1: Available grant funding in the NCP 2027 Round

	Available Grant Funding		
	\$ million		
<i>2027 Round only</i>	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28	FY 2028-29
NCP Mobility Program	7.800		
NCP Semester Program	23.500		
NCP Scholarship Program	5.294	14.049	1.018
Total	36.594		

The remaining funding in the NCP's annual budget appropriation will cover NCP scholars from previous rounds who continue their programs in 2026-27, as well as administrative support expenses for program delivery.

The amount for an NCP Semester grant is \$15,000 per student for a one-semester project, and \$24,000 per student for a 2-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 2-semester grant will be \$28,800. DFAT anticipates

supporting up to 1,000 students undertaking one semester-length experiences and 200 students undertaking 2 semester-length experiences under the NCP Semester Program.

See sections 4 and 5 for eligibility requirements.

3.2 Grant period

The minimum duration of a project is 10 weeks (70 calendar days).

The maximum project duration is 2 consecutive semesters.

Participating students must have completed the project by the end of the Semester Program term (that is, by 31 July 2029).

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

4.2 Additional eligibility criteria

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 4.3
- f) is not an employee of the branch of DFAT that administers the NCP, or the services provider
- g) is not a direct relative of the university's student mobility office or other university staff involved in the project's delivery. For the purposes of this requirement, *direct relative* includes a spouse or partner, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or any person with whom the individual has a close familial, household or dependent relationship
- h) does not:
 - (i) receive more than one NCP student grant for the same project
 - (ii) receive more than 2 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.

- i) agrees to comply with DFAT’s Child Protection Policy and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy, including the reporting obligations under these policies (see sections 5.8 and 10.3), and has completed DFAT’s online NCP pre-departure training modules
- j) has read and signed an acknowledgement that they have read NCP Semester and Mobility Programs Participant Code of Conduct prior to their departure, and
- k) takes into account the Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector.

4.3 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.

4.4 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).

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 at section 14 for definition of ‘undergraduate course’)
- c) must be undertaken in an eligible host location (see section 5.4.1)

- 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 5.8.

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.

The grant amounts are as follows:

- \$15,000 per student for participation in a project of at least one semester
- \$24,000 per student for participation in a project of 2 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.

Number of student grants

You should apply for the number of student grants that you can reasonably expect to deliver within 2027 (see section 5.5 on travel requirements) 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

Australian universities who receive an NCP Semester grant 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:

- a) activities to incentivise the offering of Indo-Pacific capability-related courses, especially in Asian languages
- b) partnership development, particularly in relation to developing new exchange/partnership arrangements in host locations
- c) development of new or sustaining consortium arrangements to maximise student participation in Indo-Pacific course offerings, especially Asian language offerings
- d) initiatives to promote the study of Asian languages and Indo-Pacific course offerings
- e) contributions to learning abroad staffing costs, especially to support expertise to service new or expanded exchange/partnership arrangements
- f) additional support to increase diverse student participation
- g) initiatives to raise the quality of the experiences (including risk management and critical incident planning for the project)
- h) planning, promoting, arranging, and negotiating the project
- i) supervising, monitoring and evaluating students' progress during the project, noting that wages for core academic staff are not eligible costs (see section 5.3)
- j) 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 program support and administration funding expenditure and be able to provide these on request. Universities must return unspent program support and administration funding to DFAT (together with unspent semester grant funding, including any interest earned if applicable) 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
- 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 Eligible host locations

5.4.1 Host locations

Subject to sections 2.4(2)(c), 5.5 and 5.6, projects must be conducted only in the following host locations:

Table 2: Eligible NCP host locations in the 2027 Round

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh • Bhutan • Brunei Darussalam • Cambodia • China (including Hong Kong and Macau) • Cook Islands • Federated States of Micronesia • Fiji • French Polynesia • India • Indonesia • Japan • Kiribati • Laos • Malaysia • Maldives • Marshall Islands • Mongolia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
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5.4.2 Primary host location

A primary host location is the host location for which the project is awarded.

5.4.3 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.

5.5 Travel requirements

The first travel date by a student as part of the proposed project should commence by 1 May 2028. If student travel is not able to commence by that date, or you are unable to reasonably justify why a student cannot commence by that date, instead apply for funding under the 2028 Round. Student travel later in the project term should only be considered as a contingency.

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 2.4).

5.6 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](#).

5.7 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)).

5.8 Safeguard Principles

Universities must comply with, and ensure students and host organisations comply with, the principles and reporting obligations outlined in DFAT's [Child Protection Policy](#)¹⁰ and [Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#).¹¹

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

To support Australia's capability in Asian languages, immersive experiences and enduring partnerships in the region, priority in the selection processes for the 2027 NCP Semester Program will be accorded to projects that will be undertaken in the **priority host locations, languages and sectors** outlined in the table below.

¹⁰ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/child-protection/child-protection-policy>

¹¹ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/protection-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment>

These priority areas are consistent with Australia’s foreign policy priorities for the Indo-Pacific, including as outlined in [Invested: Australia’s Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040](#)¹² and [A New Roadmap for Australia’s Economic Engagement with India](#).¹³ These priorities are reviewed annually.

Table 3: Priority host locations, languages and sectors in the 2027 NCP Semester Program

<p>Priority Host Locations</p>	<p>Of the eligible NCP host locations, applications to the following locations where Australia wishes to expand linkages will be prioritised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India • Indonesia • Timor-Leste • Vietnam <p>Applications for the following host locations, where Australia wants to maintain its strong, existing engagement, will also be considered highly favourably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China (including Hong Kong and Macau) • Fiji • Japan • Republic of Korea • Malaysia • Singapore • The Philippines • Taiwan • Thailand
<p>Priority Asian Languages</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bahasa Indonesia • Chinese • Hindi • Japanese • Korean • Malay • Vietnamese
<p>Priority Sectors</p>	<p>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:</p> <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

Applicants may still submit applications for other NCP host locations (listed in section 5.4.1), languages and sectors. Where eligible, these applications will be assessed on their merits in accordance with the assessment criteria at section 6.2.

¹² <https://www.dfat.gov.au/southeastasiaeconomicstrategy>

¹³ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/countries-economies-and-regions/india/new-roadmap-australias-economic-engagement-india>

6.2 Assessment criteria

In your application you will need to provide detailed input in the Project Description and you must address all of the assessment criteria below. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each criterion. See section 8.1 for further information on the assessment of applications. Please note that an up-to-300-word limit applies to each field as specified in the application template.

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), and
- whether/how the project addresses a priority area for selection per section 6.1.

Criterion 1

Alignment of proposal with the Australian Government's strategic objectives in the Indo-Pacific region

Weighting: 40 per cent

You should demonstrate this by explaining:

- a) how the project activities (such as study, internships, language learning or industry engagement) will help participants develop capability, skills and connections in the Indo-Pacific, and
- b) how the project's sectoral focus aligns with Australia's strategic or economic interests in the host location specifically.

Projects to host locations where Australia wishes to expand linkages will be prioritised, and projects to host locations where Australia wishes to maintain existing linkages will be considered highly favourably (see Table 3, section 6.1).

Criterion 2

Language focus

Weighting: 20 per cent

You should demonstrate this by describing:

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

Priority in selection processes will be given to projects which meet the language target criteria, as per the definition in the Glossary (section 14).

Criterion 3

Integrated Indo-Pacific capability development and sustainable delivery

Weighting: 30 per cent

You should demonstrate this by describing:

- a) how the proposed Semester project is designed to integrate with, and leverage, existing and/or planned Indo-Pacific capability and Asia literacy development initiatives at an institutional level
- b) how the student pipeline at your university (for example course enrolment, student interest, past project experience) will support the recruitment of students and full expenditure of sought student grants, and
- c) how the program support and administration funding will be used to develop and expand Indo-Pacific course offerings, with a focus on priority Asian languages, consortium arrangements, or development partnerships with host institutions.

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 (including consortium arrangements, if applicable), and
- 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 grant opportunity guidelines. The guidelines can be found at [GrantConnect](#).¹⁴ Any alterations or addenda will be published on GrantConnect and by registering on this website, individuals will be automatically notified of any changes to these grant opportunity guidelines.¹⁵ DFAT and/or the services provider may organise industry briefings during the application period for potential applicants, including to answer questions on the 2027 Round.

To apply you must:

- apply for funding and accept/decline funding through [SmartyGrants](#). Only the applicant's nominated NCP ILO can submit an application in the system
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
- include all necessary attachments, and
- submit your application(s) in [SmartyGrants](#) by the closing date and time.

You are responsible for ensuring the application is complete and accurate. All responses provided by an applicant must be in their own words. Giving false or misleading information is a serious

¹⁴ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

¹⁵ 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.

offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)*.¹⁶ We will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration. Further terms relating to the termination or cancellation of a project are set out in the grant agreement.

You cannot change your application after the closing date and time and date. 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.

[SmartyGrants](#) will automatically generate an email to acknowledge receipt of an application. You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

7.1 Attachments to the application

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

7.2 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. The lead applicant should also ensure that all consortium members' NCP ILOs are aware of the application and the outcome.

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

7.3 Timing of grant opportunity processes

Applications must be submitted between the opening and closing times and dates. We cannot accept late applications, including additional information about your application after the closing time and date.

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 4: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Indicative Timeframe
Applications open	9 June 2026
Applications close at 11 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST)	4 August 2026
Assessment of applications	August – October 2026

¹⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A04868/latest/text>

Activity	Indicative Timeframe
Approval of outcomes of selection process	November 2026
Distribution of grant agreements	November 2026
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	November 2026
Project start	1 January 2027
Project end	31 July 2029

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

7.4 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 to ensure information is shared with all applicants at the same time.

The NCP Secretariat will not respond to questions received after **5 pm AEST on 21 July 2026**.

8 The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of grant applications

We will firstly review your application against the eligibility criteria set out in section 4. Only eligible applications will be considered further.

If your application is eligible, we will then assess your application against the assessment criteria (see section 6) and against other applications. We consider your application 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 relevant money¹⁷.

As outlined in section 6.1, in the assessment of grant applications, priority will be given to projects that will be undertaken in the priority host locations, languages and sectors outlined in Table 3, section 6.1.

8.2 Value with relevant money

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, and
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the NCP strategic objective and outcomes.

¹⁷ See Glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

8.3 Who will assess applications?

Each eligible application will be assessed by 2 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 services provider 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, and
- project risks.

The NCP Secretariat will present these recommendations to the DFAT financial delegate (section 8.4).

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, including by reducing the number of student grants awarded to a successful project.

8.4 Who will approve grants?

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

The DFAT financial 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 DFAT financial 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

General feedback on the Round will be provided to applicants by the NCP Secretariat within a month of the 2027 Round outcomes being announced. 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 [SmartyGrants](#) 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 offered in the 2025-2027 Rounds) 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 laws, and the laws and regulations of the relevant host location(s) in Australia and in host locations when undertaking a project. This includes compliance with laws in relation to child protection and protection from 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 and NCP participants read and adhere to, DFAT's [Child Protection Policy](#)¹⁸ and [Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#),¹⁹ which set out expectations and standards 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](#).²⁰

¹⁸ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/child-protection/child-protection-policy>

¹⁹ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/protection-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment>

²⁰ <https://www.education.gov.au/countering-foreign-interference-australian-university-sector/resources/guidelines-counter-foreign-interference-australian-university-sector>

10.4 How DFAT pays the grant

The services provider 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 for Student Mobility Programs offered in the 2025-2027 Rounds.

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.

The grant agreement must be executed before grants payments can be made. Following execution of the grant agreement, you must submit to the services provider a valid tax invoice for the amount of grant offered, in accordance with the grant agreement. The services provider may elect to issue a [Recipient Created Tax Invoice](#).

The services provider will pay 100 per cent of the grant after a correctly rendered tax invoice is submitted.

You will be required to report how you spent the grant funds at the completion of the grant activity (refer section 12.2 on reporting).

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](#).²¹ We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

11 Announcement of grants

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

- the title of the project, their Australian university, host institution(s) and host location
- 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 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by section 5.4 of the [CGRPs](#).²²

12 How DFAT monitors your grant activity

12.1 Keeping DFAT informed

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

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

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details

²¹ <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

²² <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L00854/latest/text>

- bank account details.

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. The reporting should always be in your own words.

Student details are entered into [SmartyGrants](#) at least 3 weeks before a student departs Australia (section 2.4(4)(d)). Should a university fail to provide any student details in the system 30 days after the relevant indicative departure dates, DFAT may request the return of student grants, and associated Semester program support and administration funding.

Universities should submit a variation request as soon as they become aware that a project's initial travel date is no longer viable (section 12.4).

A completion report (following the template in [SmartyGrants](#)) for each project, must be submitted no later than 4 weeks after the return of the last student, and must include:

- a) 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
- b) the number of students who participated in the project and the amount of funding paid to each student as a student grant
- c) 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
- d) the actual amount of program support and administration funding used, including a detailed description/breakdown of this expenditure
- e) key achievements against the NCP strategic objective and outcomes, including project-specific information on activities undertaken (including language training if applicable) and partnerships established (including consortium arrangements), and
- f) details on the promotion and recruitment of students and lessons learned.

You may also provide:

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

12.3 Financial declaration

We may ask you to provide a financial declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and to report on any underspends of the grant money.

12.4 Grant agreement variations

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 4 weeks in advance of any planned student travel. You can request a variation via [SmartyGrants](#).

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.

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 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.

12.5 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 (npc.communications@dfat.gov.au) at any time.

Before providing images, videos or audio recordings, or personal information to the Australian Government, you must obtain informed 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.

If photographing or filming children, you must obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian, respect cultural norms, ensure dignity, and protect identifying information. It is the preference of DFAT that photographs of children are not taken.

12.6 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.

12.7 Record keeping

We may inspect the records that you are required to keep under the grant agreement

12.8 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.

12.9 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 in the NCP Brand Guidelines located on the [DFAT website](#), and should be used in accordance with the Brand Guidelines.²³

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

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

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, we will publish the addendum on [GrantConnect](#).²⁴

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](#),²⁵ noting that under the Act grantees will generally be considered 'contracted service providers' (see [NACC fact sheets](#)²⁶).

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.

²³ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/resources>

²⁴ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

²⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2022A00088/latest/text>

²⁶ <https://www.nacc.gov.au/resource-centre/nacc-fact-sheets>

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072

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 services provider and Australian universities on developing strategies to meet DFAT's fraud and corruption control contractual requirements can be found in the DFAT [Fraud and Corruption Control Toolkit for Service Providers and Funding Recipients](#).²⁷

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 in relation to the NCP Program: via [webform](#),²⁸ or fraud.corruption@dfat.gov.au.

To avoid any scams, applicants should obtain official information about the NCP Program from DFAT or its services provider or from DFAT's official website (<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 services provider's staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel, including sub-contractors, have a:

- professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who can influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer, employee of the services provider or member of an external assessment panel
- 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
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the NCP Semester program.

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.

²⁷ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/fraud-corruption/control-toolkit-service-providers-funding-recipients>

²⁸ <https://docs.dfat.gov.au/icms/external-fraud>

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform DFAT in writing immediately to ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au.

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 a services provider it engages to deliver the NCP. DFAT and its services providers 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.²⁹

The below notice provides you with important information about how DFAT and its services providers 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 services provider 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 services provider 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 services providers 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 of these guidelines.

What happens if we do not collect this personal information?

If DFAT or its services providers 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

²⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03712/latest/text> and <https://oaic.gov.au/privacy/australian-privacy-principles>

- 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 services providers 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
- services providers and agents of DFAT, the Department of Education and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- Australian universities, including to NCP ILOs
- 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](#)³⁰ 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.

³⁰ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/corporate/privacy>

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 non-disclosure 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 3 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 documents 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.
Application	an application for grant funding under the NCP Semester Program.
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 7.3.
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</i> ³¹ (PGPA Act).
Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024 (CGRPs) ³²	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.
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.

³¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2013A00123/latest/text>

³² <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L00854/latest/text>

Term	Definition
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.
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 support is required and has lasted or is likely to last for at least 6 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.
First Nations students	those students who self-identify as being of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.
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> . ³³
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> . ³⁴
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).

³³ <https://www.foreignarrangements.gov.au>

³⁴ <https://www.ag.gov.au/integrity/foreign-influence-transparency-scheme>

Term	Definition
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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. under which relevant money³⁵ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money³⁶ 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	refers to the project/tasks/services 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 ³⁷	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.
Grantee	the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant.
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.
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 semester 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.

³⁵ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

³⁶ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

³⁷ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

Term	Definition
Host location	the geographic location in the Indo-Pacific, as listed in section 5.4.1, in which students undertake semester projects.
Host organisation	any other organisation, besides the host institution that may host students for internships, mentorships, training, study or research in the host location as part of the semester 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.
Language target criteria	<p>for Australian university undergraduate students awarded under the 2027 NCP Semester Program, one of the following 2 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 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.
Law	<p>any applicable statute, regulation, by-law, ordinance or subordinate legislation in force from time to time in:</p> <ol 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.
Letter of support	a letter or email from proposed host organisation(s) indicating approval in-principle for hosting the project. A current exchange agreement may be uploaded where it indicates that students of this project may be able to secure places at the host university.

Term	Definition
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.
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.
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 . ³⁸
New Colombo Plan (NCP)	the NCP Scholarship Program, NCP Semester Program, and NCP Mobility Program.
New Colombo Plan International Liaison Officer for the Semester Program	the person(s) authorised by an Australian university to submit applications and oversee administrative processes relating to the NCP Semester Program, including reporting requirements.
New Colombo Plan Mobility Program	the program of that name administered by DFAT.
New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program	the program of that name administered by DFAT.
New Colombo Plan Semester Program	the meaning in sections 2.1.1 and 2.2.
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 , ³⁹ 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.

³⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2022A00088/latest/text>

³⁹ <https://budget.gov.au/content/pbs/index.htm>

Term	Definition
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.”
Privacy Act	the <i>Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</i> .
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 Semester Program.
Program Support Services provider (services provider)	<p>DFAT’s Program Support Services provider for the NCP who provides administration and support services to the NCP program.</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>
Project	a project that meets the eligibility requirements at section 5.1 for which you seek funding in accordance with these guidelines.
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.
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.

Term	Definition
Semester and Mobility Programs Participant Code of Conduct	the NCP Semester and Mobility Programs Participant Student Code of Conduct outlines the expectations of students participating in NCP projects in respect of personal and professional behaviour. ⁴⁰
Semester Program Term	1 January 2027 to 31 July 2029.
SmartyGrants	DFAT's online system for managing NCP applications and semester projects.
Student	a student enrolled in an Australian university throughout the duration of the project.
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 , ⁴¹ 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.
Value with money	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. 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: <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.

⁴⁰ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/resources>

⁴¹ <https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-publications/higher-education-administrative-information-providers>