

New Colombo Plan Mobility Program - Advice to applicants

The 2021 New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program Guidelines provide information on the 2021 round including eligibility requirements, assessment criteria and how funding will be allocated to successful applicants.

- Applicants must read the Guidelines together with the sample 2021 NCP Project Schedule, available on [GrantConnect](#) before filling out an application.
- [Key changes in the 2021 round](#)
- [Lessons learned from previous rounds](#)

Key changes in the 2021 round

For the 2021 NCP Mobility Program round a number of enhancements have been made to the 2021 Program. These are reflected in the Guidelines and aim to ensure consistency with the Australian Government's requirements for grant administration, streamline administration and quality assurance and reflect new policies in Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the NCP. The updates include:

- A clearer articulation of the NCP strategic objective and outcomes
- increasing the NCP's Pacific engagement by incentivising Pacific mobility projects, through updated assessment criteria (section 6.1 criterion 4) and budget allocations
- change in the weighting of each assessment criteria to better reflect the NCP strategic objective and outcomes (section 6.1)
- a requirement for staff and students participating in a mobility project to register on the Smartraveller website if a crisis page on the website is activated during a major overseas incident at the student's overseas location (section 2.6)
- a requirement for staff and students participating in a mobility project to adhere to DFAT's Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policy (section 2.6)
- a requirement for staff and students to adhere to the [University Foreign Interference Taskforce - Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the University Sector 2019](#) (section 2.6)
- a requirement for staff and students participating in a mobility project to adhere to the University Foreign Interference Taskforce - Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector 2019 (section 2.6)
- clarification of university responsibilities, particularly in relation to student welfare, risk management, quality assurance, promotion of the NCP and maximising participation by students from a diverse range of backgrounds (section 2.6)
- clarification of NCP student responsibilities, including introduction of the NCP *Student Code of Conduct* and guidance on engaging with media through the NCP Media and Publication Guidelines (section 2.6)
- requirement that written evidence confirming a Mobility Partnership is provided with the Application, if a Mobility Partnership forms part of the Mobility Project

- clarification that language training must be undertaken face to face (section 3.2.4)

Advice regarding host location eligibility

Applicants are strongly discouraged from proposing programs in a Host Location, or region within a Host Location, for which Smartraveller travel advice recommends “Do not travel” or “Reconsider your need to travel” (except where the travel advice may be short term e.g. due to an unforeseen adverse event). Travel cannot proceed to such locations if that travel advice remains in place at the time of departure (see 2.6 (c)).

Lessons from previous rounds to assist applicants for the 2021 round

The following generic feedback might assist universities in preparing applications.

Applications that were unsuccessful in previous rounds, often lacked specific detail of project activities, did not indicate how links with the Indo-Pacific (institution and people-to-people) would be sustained beyond the life of the project or did not provide details of efforts to support participation by students from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Applications that proposed the use of third party providers were often unclear as to how the linkages between Australian and Indo-Pacific institutions would be sustained beyond NCP funding. Applications that established direct relationships with Indo-Pacific institutions often provided stronger evidence that these links would be sustained.

Stronger applications demonstrated the direct links that would be established between Australian institutions and those in the Indo-Pacific (rather than using third party providers) and how relationships would be sustained beyond NCP funding, eg through joint research/innovation, reciprocal student/staff mobility, joint delivery of academic programs and alumni engagement.

Project summary

While the project summary does not contribute to the project's weighted score, a clear project description, outlining the project's objectives and rationale, the provision of practical examples of project activities, and whether the project is a new project or is building on a previous project - will enable assessors to understand better the project and provide a more informed assessment.

Project partners

Universities should exercise due diligence in their choice of partners, including investigating those partners' bona fides and their systems and safeguards (for example, risk management) and capacity to comply with relevant NCP Guidelines.

Universities should consider whether their projects consider the impact on local communities. Students paying to volunteer can lead to demand-driven activities in disadvantaged communities.

Applicants whose projects include volunteering overseas should read DFAT advice on [smart volunteering](#) and Smartraveller advice on [responsible volunteering](#).

Assessment criteria

Criterion 1: Increase student mobility, diversity and knowledge of the Indo-Pacific

To score highly, applications should

- address how the project will increase student knowledge of the region and the host location
- address how the mobility project will increase student mobility, and
- provide practical examples of how increasing student mobility, diversity and knowledge will be achieved.

Responses that have scored poorly in the past have not addressed all elements or, or did not provide examples of how increased mobility would occur through the project.

Applications should outline clearly how the institution will ensure that a diverse range of students will participate in the mobility project.

Criterion 2: Deepen people-to-people and institutional linkages

Developing new and sustainable institutional links between Australian and overseas universities, private sector organisations and other groups in the region is a core program objective. In previous rounds, strong responses demonstrated:

- how the mobility project would support new partnerships or strengthen and build on existing ones, and
- how the project partnership would be maintained in the future (e.g. through partnership agreements or other commitments).

Applications should clearly describe steps to ensure institutional/personal linkages will be maintained (subsequent to any NCP funding), for example through joint teaching/research/ innovation, alumni engagement etc.

Criterion 3: Promotion of the New Colombo Plan

Strong responses in previous rounds described specific examples of activities both in Australia and the host location to build awareness of the NCP program, its objectives and the benefits of study and internships in the Indo-Pacific.

Examples of promotion activities could include proactive promotion of the project through the media in Australia and off-shore, promotion of the NCP to relevant university staff and prospective participants and potential partners, student outreach and acknowledging Australian Government funding throughout all these types of activities.

Criterion 4: Mobility experiences in the Pacific

The Australian Government prioritises the development of linkages between institutions and individuals in Australia and the Pacific. To encourage a diversity of host locations

(beyond the focus in past rounds in North, South and Southeast Asia) in the 2021 round additional marks will be allocated for projects that include a Pacific component.

Criterion 5: Semester-based study

Applications which include semester-based study may also apply for a Language Training Grants see Criterion 9) and/or Internship Grants (see Criterion 10).

Criterion 6: In-country face-to-face language training

Stronger responses for the additional criterion for Language Training Grants in previous rounds clearly described the proposed language training program, the planned language training provider, duration of the training and benefits to the participants.

Criterion 7: Internships

Stronger responses in previous rounds have clearly described the proposed internship, including the potential host, benefits to participants, proposed duration and confirmation that all visa requirements have been considered.

Criterion 8: Mobility Partnerships

Applicants must provide details of the private sector support and show how it makes a substantial contribution to the project including outlining the benefits that will be provided and the financial or in-kind contribution that will be made. Written evidence of a Mobility Partnership with the private sector organisation will be required (MOU or similar formal agreement).

Universities may choose to use a service provider that charges fees to organise travel, place interns etc. However, such a relationship does not constitute a Mobility Partnership. When a service provider discounts the cost of part of their services, or provides some service without charge, they are still not considered to be a Mobility Partner.

Contributions by home and host Institutions do not constitute Mobility Partnerships.

Additional assessment criteria

Additional selection criteria apply for an internship grant and/or language training grant as part of a semester-based mobility project, if the project is seeking multi-term funding or if the host institution is an off-shore campus of an Australian university.

Criterion 9: Language Training Grants as part of semester-based mobility projects

This criterion should only be completed if an applicant is applying for a Language Grant (an additional \$1,000 per student) as part of a semester-based mobility project.

To be eligible, projects must also score highly (3 or above) on Assessment Criterion 6.

Criterion 10: Internship Grants as part of semester-based mobility projects

This criterion should only be completed if an applicant is applying for an Internship Grant (an additional \$1,000 per student) as part of a semester-based mobility project.

To be eligible, projects must also score highly (3 or above) on Assessment Criterion 7.

Criterion 11: Multi-term funding

In previous rounds, strong responses clearly described how the funding would support the applicant's strategy to increase and sustain student mobility to the Indo-Pacific, including how it would stimulate new opportunities to scale-up and sustain ongoing student mobility, and strengthen and enhance institutional links with the project partners.

Criterion 12: Is the host university an offshore campus of an Australian university?

The NCP is intended to build lasting linkages between Australian institutions and those in the Indo-Pacific region. Australian universities are strongly encouraged to partner with institutions established in the Indo-Pacific. There has been significant growth in recent years in the range of courses delivered in English by universities in the Indo-Pacific.

If an applicant wishes to partner with an offshore campus of an Australian university, the applicant will need to provide evidence of their efforts to partner with local institutions in the region, including the institutions approached. The ability of the project to establish links between Australian and Indo-Pacific institutions will be assessed in Criterion 2.

Projects must be deemed eligible and score highly against Assessment Criterion 2.

Summary

Mobility project applications that scored well in previous rounds

- clearly and concisely addressed all elements of each relevant assessment criterion, and
- provided practical examples to demonstrate how the project meets the assessment criteria and will achieve the NCP objectives.

Thank you for your interest in the 2021 round of the New Colombo Plan Mobility Program.