



ADDENDUM 1

to the Grant Opportunity Notice GO8470 – New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2027 Round released on 9 June 2026.

DFAT provides the following information to assist prospective grant applicants. This includes answers to questions received by the New Colombo Plan (NCP) Secretariat between 9 June and 5 pm AEST 18 June 2026, including questions received during the Industry Briefing on the NCP 2027 Round on 15 June 2026.

Questions and Answers:

Ref	Question	Answer
1	Can applicants provide 2 referees?	Per section 7.3 of the 2027 NCP Scholarship Program Guidelines: 'A complete application must include details of at least one and up to 2 referees'.
2	My university does not have places at the exchange host university for the number of students who have submitted expressions of interest (EOIs). For example, 30 students applied to the same institution, and we have only one exchange place with that partner. Are universities allowed to advise students to consider another partner as their host institution?	Yes, universities can advise their applicants accordingly. DFAT recognises issues relating to the number of available exchange placements for applicants. Universities should also engage with applicants on their proposed programs, including to influence applicants to undertake programs in priority host locations where there may be less demand and where the university has known exchange places or where the university is able to support a study abroad program. If a scholar is unable to secure the placement outlined in their application, DFAT is willing to consider a variation later in the process to change the study host institution within the same host location.
3	If a university has limited exchange places with its partner and they take students on fee-paying study abroad, where does NCP stand in paying the tuition fee for the study abroad component if we send the applicant on a fee-paying basis rather than exchange?	That is allowed. DFAT changed the NCP Scholarship Program Guidelines for the 2027 Round to allow for study abroad or fee-paying options where there are not available exchange places at the host university (see section 5.2.1). The home



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		university must first exhaust its exchange places.
4	If an applicant is fee-paying, the Guidelines state the letter should confirm no exchange agreement is in place. If a university is proposing to send the applicant on a fee-paying basis because we do not have enough exchange places, how would the letter work?	For these applicants, universities will be able to meet their feasibility letter obligations by explaining that exchange places were unavailable.
5	Can you provide clarification on the expectations on universities to put forward all eligible students who expressed interest? Should universities put forward every eligible student based on the eligibility criteria? Can we put forward a certain number of students based on our assessment of the selection criteria or feasibility of the proposed program?	The policy intent of the change from nominations to EOIs is to avoid universities engaging in discretionary assessment. Under the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024 (CGRPs), as an open competitive grants program this is DFAT's responsibility. Universities still have a high degree of control over who they put forward because they provide support to the applicant through the feasibility letter. If an applicant's proposed program is non-feasible, the university should not provide a feasibility letter to support the application.
6	Universities having to generate feasibility letters for every applicant that meets the eligibility criteria and who proposes a feasible program is a large body of work. For applicants commencing later in 2027, how much detail do we need for the feasibility letters now?	DFAT is exploring options for reducing the administrative burden for universities attesting to the feasibility of their applicants' programs, recognising that the introduction of program support and administration funding under the NCP Scholarship Program is intended to maximise universities' participation under the program.
7	Can universities apply a grade point average (GPA) requirement, so we know we are putting forward students who are capable of undertaking study in an overseas location? Are universities still expected to put forward applicants who are just 'scraping by'?	There is no minimum GPA requirement for the NCP Scholarship Program – this was removed from the program guidelines in the 2025 round to maximise the eligible student cohort, including students from diverse cohorts. DFAT recognises that certain exchange partners will have a minimum GPA requirement. This is a matter for universities to consider when advising on feasibility for proposed programs. Recognising that many host institutions require a minimum GPA, the university's feasibility letter



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		must indicate if an applicant is in good academic standing according to their policies. Any updates to the feasibility letter can be made via email correspondence with NCP.Secretariat@dfat.gov.au.
8	Universities may have policies that the student must be able to represent the university and Australia overseas in an appropriate manner. If universities feel that a student may not be able to do that, what should be recommended to that student?	DFAT asks universities to attest to the applicant's good academic standing as part of the feasibility letter. DFAT will assess the applicant's ability to undertake an overseas program as part of its assessment process.
9	Section 2.6(o) of the Guidelines outlines that scholars must not undertake another course of study while on program, specifically regarding any online units offered by their home university. A university has an online unit at the student's home university for exchange students. The students are studying a full academic load at their host university, but they also undertake the online unit. Is this something that should be requested at the application stage, or do you anticipate this being a concern?	The policy intent of this change was to avoid scenarios where scholars attempted to undertake online learning to complete units at their home university and bring forward their degree completion. The NCP Scholarship Program is designed to be an immersive experience for scholars in the host location, achieved through a full-time study load, full-time internship or full-time language training (or a combination of full and part-time components where relevant). The scenario described appears to be manageable and will not detract from the immersive quality of the NCP program. The scholar should flag it with the program support services provider after they commence their program.
10	What information is needed to submit the university EOI?	The EOI form is open on SmartyGrants and DFAT encourages all universities to familiarise themselves with the form. The information required is similar to the information required through the nomination process in previous NCP rounds. It includes but is not limited to: • student name • student age • student contact details • proposed host location



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		• home degree and field of study • an outline of steps taken by the university to ensure a diverse cohort of applicants • declarations about privacy disclosures, student eligibility, and the university supporting the student through the process. The form also requires the university administration team to identify which staff members at your institution will have visibility of student applications.
11	The 2027 Guidelines state at section 4.1 that a scholar will be deemed to have completed their degree on the date they finished their final exam or assessment. Don't applicants have to return to their home university to finish a unit to be considered eligible?	No. For the 2027 round, eligible applicants are not required to have remaining units to return to and complete at their home university. Scholars can finish their degree while on program, but in these cases the study component must be at the end of their program. As soon as a scholar completes their degree requirements, their program must end. This is to ensure adherence with the legislative basis for NCP's funding appropriation, which can only fund undergraduate students. If an applicant anticipates finishing their degree while on their NCP program, they should give thought to structuring their program so the study component is the last component and undertake a leave of absence from their home university to cover their non-credit bearing language learning and/or internship components. Determining degree completion at the point of the date of the final exam or assessment is consistent with other Australian Government student support mechanisms, such as Austudy.
12	The Guidelines state that applicants don't have to determine their internship at the time of application. Would DFAT allow the following scenario (when considering enrolment/degree completion requirements)? A applicant intends that the study component will be credit-bearing and they will return to their home university to finish a final unit. However, after they have been awarded a Scholarship, they	The Guidelines state at section 5.2.2: While internships and mentorships do not need to be confirmed at the time of application, strong applications will demonstrate that they have researched achievable internship components that align with their program objectives. In this scenario, the applicant should ensure their application includes the proposed internship component. A variation cannot be used to add an internship component after



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	secure an internship that the university would be willing to accept as credit bearing. Would this be allowed?	award. The applicant does not need to confirm if the internship will be credit-bearing at the application stage, but they will need to receive their university's approval for credit recognition before the internship commences. If a university accepts an internship as credit-bearing, this could mean the internship serves as the final academic requirement for the scholar's degree. In such situations, the scholar must end their program when the internship is concluded. DFAT notes that the (credit-bearing) study component is mandatory. In the scenario above, the scholar would undertake the study component and then undertake the internship. Should the internship contribute to the completion of the degree, then the scholar will not need to return to the home university. However, if the internship is not deemed to be credit-bearing the scholar may have units to complete at their home university. See also the response to Q11.
13	How strict are the requirements for variations? For example, do applicants have to commit to the internship they have listed in their application? Or can they change units in their study component?	Variations are only considered in exceptional circumstances. DFAT recognises that while some flexibility is required, scholarships are awarded based on what applicants said they would do in their applications. DFAT considers variations in that light. For example, DFAT is willing to be flexible if a scholar needs to make a variation to a component within a host location (for example, the exact units the scholar completes). However, DFAT would be less flexible when it comes to changing host location because that is foundational to the assessment process. For internships, applicants should indicate their intent to undertake one. It will not ordinarily be possible to add an internship component to a program which did not include one at the application stage. DFAT recognises that internships can often only be confirmed once scholars arrive in the host location. As part of the application, applicants should provide as much information – including



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		evidence of research – about their proposed internship in the application.
14	The NCP Scholarship Guidelines state that ‘scholarship programs 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 5.2.1). I have a student who is interested in applying for the 2027 Scholarship program in an Indo-Pacific campus operated by a third country external to the region. Is this an eligible host institution?	No. Third-country transnational institutions are not eligible as host institutions under the NCP. The NCP allows for Australian offshore campus participation where an immersive experience for students can be offered.
15	I was wondering if the proposed program section of the scholarship application form will be a 500-word response as it was in the 2026 round?	The application form will be available on SmartyGrants for applicants following the closing of the university EOI process.
16	Will DFAT provide an application guide and advice to applicant document as with previous years (attached)?	DFAT has published a ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ resource on the NCP Scholarship Program webpage, which provides advice to applicants for the 2027 Round. As SmartyGrants has ample resources for applicants, we will no longer produce a system application guide. There is also help text in the form itself to guide the applicant.
17	Regarding the NCP Scholarship Program EOI form, is there a way to upload a spreadsheet or upload student details in bulk?	There is no functionality to bulk upload EOI student data to SmartyGrants. The data entered into SmartyGrants is essential for the next steps in the process, including issuing application invitations. University administrators can save progress in your EOI form in SmartyGrants and come back to edit it at any point before you submit it, so you do not need to wait until you have your full list of students to begin.



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		We recommend that you click 'Save progress' each time you add a student or make a change to the EOI form, and please do not submit the form until all students you are putting forward have been added. The information requirements are not dissimilar to that required in Endeavour Online, and DFAT notes that the program support and administration funding component of the NCP Scholarship Program from 2027 is designed to maximise universities' participation under the expanded scholarships program.
18	Is there a plan for another session on SmartyGrants?	There is currently no plan to do another session on SmartyGrants for the application stage. SmartyGrants has documentation and guidance on how to use the software, including how to complete the applications. DFAT can organise another session if enough people express interest. Please email ncp.secretariat@dfat.gov.au if you would like another session on using SmartyGrants for applications. DFAT plans to have another session about managing projects on SmartyGrants later in the year.
19	Is there a limit to the number of staff accessing SmartyGrants?	There is no limit. It is up to the university to manage access to SmartyGrants/SmartyFile and internal EOI and application approval processes. Universities are encouraged to ensure the permissions features in SmartyFile are carefully managed and to have at least 2 staff allocated with administrator access.
20	Is there an intention as in previous years to run a webinar for students who have submitted an EOI and will be applying for the NCP Scholarship? If so, could you advise what day and time this webinar would be?	A recorded webinar will likely be held on 13 July. More details will be provided directly to applicants following the closing of the university EOI process.



Attachments to this Addendum

1. New Colombo Plan 2027 Round Industry Briefing – Presentation Slides
2. [New Colombo Plan 2027 Round Industry Briefing – Presentation Recording](#)

All other information as set out in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines dated 9 June 2026 remains unchanged.

---End of Addendum No. 1---