NCP Mobility Program:
Advice to Applicants

Note: Advice to Applicants should be read in conjunction with the 2018 New Colombo Plan (NCP) Mobility Program Guidelines.

Key changes in the 2018 round

There is approximately $40 million available for Australian universities and consortia to support 2018 student mobility projects. This is for single-term mobility projects and the first year of multi-year mobility projects through student grants and a contribution to applicants’ administration costs. Funding for the second and third years of any successful multi-year mobility projects will be additional to this, based on the outcomes of selection processes. A number of enhancements have been made to the Mobility Program for the 2018 round, including:

- The addition of two new eligible host locations, French Polynesia and New Caledonia
- The introduction of a minimum project duration of two weeks
- Exemption from the age requirements for Indigenous students
- Clarification of what constitutes a mobility partnership
- The selection criteria preference applications that align to the greatest extent with NCP strategic objectives. Projects that support semester-based and longer-term study, internships, language acquisition and mobility partnerships will continue to be prioritised
- Around 25 per cent of total funding available under the 2018 round may be directed to multi-year projects. Should a multi-year project not be selected for funding, the first term of the project will automatically be considered for funding as single-term project.

Lessons learned from previous rounds to assist 2018 applicants

The following generic advice might also assist universities in preparing applications.

Criterion 1 (student mobility) and 2 (institutional partnerships) together will account for the majority (70 per cent) of possible marks to be allocated for 2018 mobility projects. Criterion 1 has the highest weighting of all the selection criteria. A core objective of the NCP Mobility Program is to encourage increased student mobility to the Indo-Pacific region. Strong responses to this criterion in previous rounds have addressed both elements – (i) how the project will increase student knowledge of the Indo-Pacific region and the host location, and also (ii) how the project will increase student mobility. Good responses have also provided concrete examples of how this will be achieved. For example, increased knowledge of the region could take place through direct learning or engagement with local institutions and
communities. Increased student mobility could occur by increasing the number of students able to participate or expanding program types or fields of study. Weaker responses in the past have not addressed both elements, or did not provide examples of how increased mobility would occur through the project.

Another core objective of the NCP Mobility Program is to encourage the development of new and ongoing institutional links between Australian and overseas universities, private sector organisations and other groups to facilitate study and work-based learning opportunities for Australian undergraduates in the region. Strong responses to Criterion 2 in previous rounds demonstrated how the mobility project would support new partnerships or strengthen and build on existing ones, but also how the project partnership would be maintained in the future (e.g. through partnership agreements or other commitments). Strong responses have also clearly described what steps were being taken to ensure the project would continue to operate in future years.

For Criterion 3, strong responses have demonstrated how the project would be promoted in Australia and the host location to build awareness of the program, its objectives and the benefits of study and internships in the Indo-Pacific. Strong responses have also provided specific examples of promotional activities in Australia and the host location, for example, acknowledging Australian Government funding, proactive promotion of the project through the media, promotion of the NCP to relevant university staff and prospective participants, and student outreach.

Criteria 4, 5, 6 and 7 attract additional weighting, where the project involves semester-based study, language training, an internship or a Mobility Partnership. Where any private sector partnership arrangements exist, under criterion 7, applicants must now discuss the nature of the private sector support in some detail and show how it makes a substantial contribution to the project. Evidence in the form of a letter from the private sector organisation is no longer required. In terms of the additional selection criteria, universities can apply for an internship grant as part of a semester-based mobility project. Stronger responses to this criterion 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.

In the 2017 round, strong responses to the additional selection criteria for multi-year funding clearly described how the funding would support the applicant’s institutional 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.

It has been extremely helpful for assessors when applicants have provided a clear and thorough summary of the project in the ‘project description’ section in the application form. While the summary does not contribute to the project’s weighted score, where the project description has been clear, it has enabled assessors to better understand the project and provide a more informed assessment.

Overall, strong mobility project applications in the past have been clear and concise, addressed all elements of each individual criterion and provided concrete examples to demonstrate how the criteria and NCP objectives will be achieved.