



Australia Awards

# Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships Policy Handbook

January 2016



# You must read this Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships Policy Handbook carefully and fully understand its contents before signing the Contract with the Commonwealth of Australia.

The handbook is provided to answer any questions you may have about your scholarship. Please also read the other information in your pre-departure pack and follow the instructions carefully.

For further assistance, please contact DFAT at [scholarshipsfiji@dfat.gov.au](mailto:scholarshipsfiji@dfat.gov.au)

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# AUSTRALIA AWARDS PACIFIC SCHOLARSHIP CYCLE



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Academic year	Australia's academic year is the same as the calendar year
Alumni	Alumni are defined as Australia Awards recipients who have successfully completed their scholarship and returned home
Applicant	A person who has applied for, but has not yet received, a DFAT funded scholarship
Arrival date	The day on which an awardee arrives in the study country at the commencement of their scholarship and registers their arrival with their institution
Articulating course	A course of study which progresses to another course of study at a higher qualification level. Also known as a package program e.g. Postgraduate Diploma articulating to a Masters
Australia Awards Scholarship awardee	A person in receipt of a DFAT funded scholarship
Commencement date	The date the award commences which is the date that the awardee departs the home country
Contribution to living expenses (CLE)	A fortnightly payment to awardees during the scholarship, at a rate determined by DFAT (sometimes referred to as Stipend)
Deferral	Where an awardee delays the commencement date of their scholarship up to 12 months
Dependant	Spouse (a person you are married to, or a de facto partner, including same sex partner) or children under 18 years of age
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Establishment allowance	A one-off allowance paid to each new awardee when they commence their scholarship, to contribute to their start-up costs
Extension	Any increase in the length of an Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship
Field of study	The vocational area of specialisation or principal subject matter of an Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship awardee's course e.g. agriculture, health, etc.



Fieldtrip	A short class-based excursion for the purposes of education or research to provide awardees with experiences outside their everyday course activities
Fieldwork	Research or attachment usually undertaken in the home country as part of an awardee's study program. Fieldwork can also be undertaken in the study country
Foundation program	An intensive study program of up to 12 months offered to undergraduate awardees who do not meet the required standard for direct entry into their chosen course
Introductory Academic Program	A program provided by the institution to orient new awardees to the institution and its surroundings before they commence their academic program
International English Language Testing System (IELTS)	An international standardised test of English language proficiency which is accepted by regional institutions. It could also be an eligibility requirement for Pacific institutions
In-country	In the applicant's home country, not in the study country
Institution	Tertiary education institution providing education services to DFAT awardees
Long-term award	An award (scholarship) supporting studies of more than six months towards a qualification
Managing contractor (MC)	A person or organisation that is contracted by a DFAT Program Area to manage the implementation of scholarships
OASIS	Online Australia Awards Scholarships Information System
Panel	Group of people drawn together for the purposes of selecting and/or interviewing awardees
Partner government	A government that has an agreement relating to Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships with Australia
Pre-course English	An intensive English program provided to awardees who need additional English language skills before starting their qualification studies
Placement offer	An offer of enrolment made by the institution to the awardee. The placement offer specifies the course, duration of study and also includes an estimate of the associated costs such as academic fees and stipend allowances

	Placements (requests and offers) are processed in OASIS by the Program Area and the institution
Post-scholarship externally funded program	Study or other activity undertaken after awardees finish their Australia Award Pacific Scholarship studies
Preliminary program	Courses deemed necessary by the institution to enable an awardee to successfully complete their qualification in the timeframe specified by the institution
Preparation program	One or more introductory courses that an institution can require awardees to undertake before they start their chosen course. Preparation programs include pre-course English, preliminary programs and foundation programs
Program Area	DFAT country program, often located outside Australia and usually at an Australian diplomatic mission (Embassy or High Commission)
Receiving Post (RP)	The Australian Diplomatic Mission (Embassy or High Commission) located in the study country
Regional Scholarships Team (RST)	The team designated by the institution to be its main point of contact with DFAT for students at USP and FNU
Reintegration plan	An awardee's proposed strategy for using the new skills and knowledge when they return home at the end of their studies
Request for placement (RFP)	A request on behalf of an awardee made through OASIS by a DFAT Sending Post or managing contractor for a placement offer from an institution
Scholarship	A long-term award (eg Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship) funded by DFAT
Sending Post (SP)	The Australian Diplomatic Mission (Embassy or High Commission) located in the student's home country
Sensitive information	<p>(a) information or an opinion about an individual's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) racial or ethnic origin, or</li> <li>(ii) political opinions, or</li> <li>(iii) membership of a political association, or</li> <li>(iv) religious beliefs or affiliations, or</li> <li>(v) philosophical beliefs, or</li> <li>(vi) membership of a professional or trade association, or</li> <li>(vii) membership of a trade union, or</li> </ul>

	(viii) sexual preferences or practices, or (ix) criminal record, that is also personal information, or (b) health information about an individual, or (c) genetic information about an individual that is not otherwise health information
Suspension	The temporary cessation of an awardee's study program and financial support from DFAT
Termination	DFAT's decision to end an award before the completion of study
Variation	Any change to the original placement offer made to the recipient of an award
Vocational education and training (VET)	A qualification level designed to skill workers for particular industries.  VET is part of a broader educational network in schools, universities, and adult and community education
Withdrawal	When an awardee chooses to cease their award before completing the course of study

## 1. Australia Awards

Australia Awards are prestigious international awards offered by the Australian Government to the next generation of global leaders for development.

Australia Awards aim to promote knowledge, education links and enduring ties between Australia, our neighbours and the global community. The Australia Awards bring the international scholarships offered by DFAT and Department of Education and the Australian Council for International Agricultural Research into a single, recognisable brand.

International scholarships have been an important component of the Australian Government's overseas aid program since the Colombo Plan in the 1950s. They support its aim to help developing countries reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development.

DFAT's Australia Awards include the Australia Awards Scholarships, Australia Awards Fellowships and the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships. They provide opportunities for long and short-term study and professional development and aim to:

- develop capacity and leadership skills so that individuals can contribute to development in their home country
- build people-to-people links at the individual, institutional and country levels.

This Scholarships policy Handbook is for Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships. It does not include the Australia Awards Scholarships, or Australia Awards Fellowships. Throughout, the term 'scholarships' shall mean Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships.

## 1.1. Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships

- 1.1.1. Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships aim to contribute to the long-term development needs of Australia's partner countries in line with bilateral and regional agreements. They provide opportunities for people from developing countries to undertake full-time undergraduate or postgraduate study at participating Pacific regional universities and Vocational and Education Training (VET) institutions.
- 1.1.2. The Australian Government encourages women and people with disability to apply for Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships (for more information on support for awardees with disability see [Chapter 9](#)). Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships aim to empower women to participate in the economy, leadership and education, and enhance the lives of people with disability.
- 1.1.3. The study and research opportunities provided by Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships develop the skills and knowledge of individuals to drive change and contribute to the development outcomes of their own country.
- 1.1.4. To ensure the development impact of Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships, all awardees must return home on completion of their studies so they can contribute to development in their country. Awardees are required to return home for a minimum of two years after completing their scholarship. Failure to do so will result in the awardee incurring a debt to the Commonwealth of Australia for the total accrued cost of their scholarship.
- 1.1.5. Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships generally cover the following fees and entitlements: (see [Chapter 10](#) for further details.)
  - i. full tuition fees
  - ii. return air travel
  - iii. establishment allowance
  - iv. contribution to living expenses
  - v. an Introductory Academic Program
  - vi. basic medical costs for student only
  - vii. visa expenses where required.
  - viii. pre-course English language training fees
  - ix. supplementary academic support
  - x. fieldwork (for research purposes only)
  - xi. reunion airfare (for unaccompanied awardees).
- 1.1.6. The Australian Government provides nominal financial assistance for the dependants of awardees. This cost is designed to cover student, spouse and two children under 18 years of age. The award does not cover any travel or visa costs for dependants.

## 1.2. How to use this scholarships policy handbook

- 1.2.1. This handbook provides the guiding policy and instructions for those managing or undertaking the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships. Institutions, applicants or awardees, DFAT officers at Sending and Receiving Posts (and their managing contractors/sub-contractors) have access to this

handbook. They should be familiar with its contents and understand their roles and responsibilities.

- 1.2.2. Institutions, applicants, awardees, DFAT officers, Sending and Receiving Posts (and their managing contractors and their sub-contracted Case Managers) must read and comply with this handbook. To help users identify the sections which are most relevant to them, or identify actions they need to take to comply with the policy, this handbook differentiates users by coloured boxes and icons for each group of users. The key for each user is at the bottom of each page.

- 1.2.3. Scholarships policy or instruction most relevant for applicants or awardees.



- 1.2.4. Scholarships policy or instruction most relevant for Sending Posts (and their managing contractor and case managers).



- 1.2.5. Scholarships policy or instruction most relevant for institutions.



- 1.2.6. Scholarships policy or instruction most relevant for the Receiving Post.



- 1.2.7. OASIS is DFAT's internet-based data management system. It enables DFAT, managing contractors and institutions to access a centralised database to electronically enter and store data, process applications and manage awards. DFAT provides users with an OASIS user manual and initial training.

- 1.2.8. This handbook stipulates when actions need to be taken in OASIS at each stage of the process. For a detailed description of these, Posts and institutions can refer to the OASIS user manual.

- 1.2.9. This handbook underpins the contract:

- i. between DFAT and institutions or Managing Contractors to provide education services, and
- ii. between the awardee and the Australian Government.



- 1.2.10. An institution should use the guidance in this handbook, together with its knowledge and experience, to make decisions that are in the best interests of the Australian Government, the awardee and the institution.

## Policy handbook review and update

- 1.2.11. As noted, this handbook forms part of the contractual arrangements between awardees, institutions and DFAT. It is reviewed periodically to maintain its relevance and consistency with current DFAT policy.

- 1.2.12. DFAT reserves the right to amend this handbook and will provide timely notification of any changes. However, it is the reader's responsibility to check the handbook regularly.



### 1.3. Management responsibilities

- 1.3.1. The **Suva Post** has responsibility for :
- i. AAPS student management policy. This is often informed by policy for Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS) managed by the Scholarships and Alumni Branch in Canberra
  - ii. developing and maintaining AAPS student management policies and conditions often informed by AAS policy
  - iii. managing AAPS contracts in Fiji
  - iv. assisting SPs with implementation of policies given that a large number of AAPS students study in Fiji
  - v. AAPS awardees in Samoa and Vanuatu as they are managed under the contract to the University of the South Pacific (USP)
- 1.3.2. Port Moresby is the Receiving Post for AAPS in PNG.
- 1.3.3. The following summarises responsibilities for users of this handbook.

#### DFAT Receiving Post (RP)

- 1.3.4. The Receiving Post is the DFAT Post in the study country. It has responsibility for :
- i. AAPS contract management including that for institutions and Managing Contractors in the study country
  - ii. liaising with SPs when and where necessary including administration of scholarships processing for awards in the study country
  - iii. assisting with critical incidents involving AAPS awardees
- 1.3.5. The Australia Awards PNG Facility is the Managing Contractor for Scholarships in PNG and is the primary RP contact for awardees in PNG.



#### DFAT Sending Post (SP)

- 1.3.6. DFAT Posts are in-country offices, DFAT country programs are in Canberra (or desks), and work collaboratively on the following policy tasks:
- i. liaising with partner governments and relevant authorities on Australia Awards, including Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships matters
  - ii. organising the nomination process and promoting awards
  - iii. processing applications (hardcopy and online)
  - iv. managing the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships selection process in-country



- v. forwarding placement requests to institutions in OASIS by the deadline, and ensuring that documents accompanying the requests have been properly certified
  - vi. notifying all applicants of the outcome of the selection process
  - vii. holding functions for awardees as appropriate
  - viii. advising the relevant RP and institutions of awardees with disability who require additional assistance, liaising with institutions to determine the level of support they require and providing any additional support for awardees with disability
  - ix. arranging in-country pre-course English where relevant
  - x. providing guidance to awardees around visa application process
  - xi. arranging travel for awardees and recording travel details in OASIS where relevant
  - xii. requesting character and/or police checks from awardees and ensuring these are received before awardees depart
  - xiii. providing pre-departure briefings to awardees, using DFAT alumni where possible
  - xiv. processing and approving Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship variations in OASIS, where relevant and in accordance with current policy and financial delegations
  - xv. promoting and supporting Australia Awards Alumni networks.
- 1.3.7. A number of Posts have contracted in-country management of Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships to a managing contractor and sub-contracted Case Managers. For the purposes of this handbook, references to Program Areas or Posts may relate to responsibilities of either Program Areas, managing contractor, or Case Managers depending on each country program's internal arrangements and the division of responsibilities.
- 1.3.8. The roles and responsibilities of managing contractors are generally set out in their agreement with DFAT. However, Program Areas/Posts are responsible for clearly defining responsibilities with the managing contractor and ensuring that they are aware of all guidance on Australia Awards, including this handbook. This responsibility extends to sub-contractors.

## Institutions or Managing Contractor

- 1.3.9. Tertiary education institutions contracted by DFAT are responsible for study country management of awardees in accordance with this handbook and their contract with DFAT. Management responsibilities include:
- i. responding to Program Areas'/Posts' requests for placing an awardee
  - ii. meeting the academic and pastoral requirements of awardees from time of arrival until the completion of their award, including, where necessary, intervening early to ensure academic success
  - iii. ensuring records in OASIS are up-to-date and accurate
  - iv. providing information to DFAT about the awardees on request
  - v. managing finances in accordance with the contract



- vi. managing risks in accordance with the contract
- vii. providing reasonable assistance, including making reasonable adjustments, for awardees with disability.

1.3.10. Institution or Management Contractor Contact Officer:

- i. Institutions or the Managing Contractor must nominate a contact officer whose role is to act as the prime contact for liaison between the institution and DFAT on matters not directly related to awardees.

1.3.11. Student or Management Contract Contact Officers:

- i. An institution's or Management Contractor's Student Contact Officers are the points of contact for awardees in relation to Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships. The institution decides how to manage these arrangements, including the roles and responsibilities of the contact officers in the Regional Scholarships Team (RST).

## Applicants and awardees

1.3.12. Applicants are responsible for reading and understanding the policies underpinning Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships.



1.3.13. Awardees are responsible for providing complete, true and accurate information at all times including, but not limited to, the information provided in their award and visa applications.

1.3.14. Applicants and awardees must not give false or misleading information at any time in relation to their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships application or while studying in Australia.

1.3.15. Awardees are responsible for their academic and personal conduct as defined in [Chapter 6](#) of this handbook and for complying with their contract with the Commonwealth of Australia, which they must sign to accept the scholarship offer.

## 2. Applying for an Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship

### 2.1. Eligibility criteria

2.1.1. To be eligible to receive an Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship, applicants must:



- i. be a minimum of 18 years of age on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year they are commencing the scholarship
- ii. be a citizen of a participating country (as listed on the Australia Awards website)
- iii. not be married, engaged to, or a de facto of a person who holds, or is eligible to hold, Australian or New Zealand citizenship or permanent residency, at any time during the application, selection or mobilisation phases (note: residents of Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau with New Zealand citizenship are eligible)
- iv. not be current serving military personnel
- v. not be a citizen of Australia or New Zealand, hold permanent residency in Australia or New Zealand or be applying for a visa to live in Australia or New



Zealand permanently

- vi. not be applying for another long-term Australia Award Pacific Scholarship unless they have resided in their home country for two years since the conclusion of their scholarship
- vii. have satisfied any specific criteria established by the Program Area or Post or the government of the applicant's country of citizenship
- viii. be able to satisfy the admission requirements of the institution at which the award is to be undertaken (this may mean that Post will need to withdraw an award offer if the recipient cannot satisfy the institution's admission requirements. This may not be known until the Post requests a placement at selected institutions)
- ix. be able to satisfy all requirements of the Department of Immigration for the study country. This may mean that the Post will need to withdraw an award offer if the recipient cannot satisfy the visa requirements.
- x. Applicants must inform the Post of any connection or relationship to staff employed at Program Areas or Post or with managing contractors so that the application may be properly and transparently managed.

2.1.2. Posts may consider the following exceptions to [2.1.1\(ii\)](#) in relation to applicants being required to apply from their country of citizenship:

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- i. applicants working for their government in a third country
- ii. applicants residing in the immediate region to which they would be willing to grant an award (e.g. Pacific Island countries considering applicants from other eligible Pacific Island countries), noting that the award will be reported as belonging to the applicant's country of citizenship.

## 2.2. Country and regional profiles

2.2.1. Applicants must read the applicable country or regional profile for details on the application process, as opening and closing dates for applications, country specific requirements (including English language) and documentation requirements may vary. The profiles can be found at <http://www.dfat.gov.au/australia-awards/Pages/eligiblecountries.aspx>

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## 2.3. English language requirements

- 2.3.1. An applicant or awardee will meet DFAT's English language requirements for receiving an Australia Awards Scholarship if their first language is English and if they have undertaken their education in English (evidenced by their academic transcripts).
- 2.3.2. Note that some institutions may still require evidence of English language proficiency, and Program Areas/Posts relying on the above may need to check whether institutions accept applicants from particular regions or with particular qualifications from English language institutions.

- i. where an applicant or awardee does not meet the necessary English language requirements (see [Section 2.3.1](#)), the awardee will need to provide an academic English language test result that meets the institution's academic English language requirement tests before commencing the approved main course of studies. Below are accepted English language tests:
    - International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
    - Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
    - Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic)
- 2.3.3. Awardees' English language test results must be valid at 01 January of the year in which the awardee is commencing studies (IELTS, TOEFL scores, and PTE Academic are valid for two years after the test date).

### Pre-course English training

- 2.3.4. Country programs may elect to provide English training to awardees in their home country or the immediate region.
- i. This training can be up to 12 months prior to commencement of formal study program and will be included in the award

### Pre-course English language training in-country

- 2.3.5. SPs may elect to provide pre-course English language training in country, prior to mobilisation. S
- i. It is up to SPs/Program Areas to determine on what basis they provide in-country English language training, and whether training is provided prior to or after a provisional offer of an award.
- 2.3.6. SPs/Program Areas will determine when applicants or awardees need to provide evidence of their English language abilities and advise applicants accordingly. Program Areas must provide the evidence in OASIS when requesting a placement for the applicant at an institution.

- 2.3.7. Before making a placement offer, institutions should give careful consideration to the English language training that an awardee may require. I
- 2.3.8. An institution must not accept an awardee if they are unlikely to reach the standard of English required for the main course of studies.

## 2.4. Finding an appropriate course and institution

- 2.4.1. Scholarships are available only for courses agreed to by DFAT and partner governments and listed on institution websites and Course Handbooks.
- 2.4.2. Scholarship applicants are not required to have an offer of place at an institution when they apply. However, applicants must have researched their preferred courses, including information provided on institution websites (see Appendix C), and

Institution Course Handbooks.

- 2.4.3. Applicants are expected to undertake research on the institutions that provide the most appropriate course of study which meets their needs. Applicants must include their course and institution preferences when submitting their application for a Scholarship.

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- 2.4.4. Institutions may offer in-country information sessions and also have extensive information on their individual websites. An institution may recommend a qualifying or preliminary course to be taken as part of the awardee's academic program.

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- 2.4.5. SPs may also assist applicants to make an informed decision on the most appropriate course of study and location.

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## 2.5. Types of courses available to applicants

- 2.5.1. The types of courses available for study under a Scholarship will depend on the applicant's home country government and/or DFAT policy. Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships may be available for the following types of courses:
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses
  - Bachelor degree (undergraduate) courses
  - Master degree courses
  - Doctorate degree (PhD) programs

- 2.5.2. Applicants must read the relevant Country or Regional Profile or check with the nearest DFAT office (or the Managing Contractor's office) to find out what types of courses are available to them. For example, some Program Areas do not provide scholarships for undergraduate or PhD studies.

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### Bachelor degrees

- 2.5.3. The maximum duration of study permitted for a Bachelor degree is five years, except for the Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBBS). Double Bachelor degrees are permitted so long as both are included in the original offer.

- 2.5.4. Institutions may recommend an awardee undertaking a Bachelor degree to do an Honours year by submitting a Course Transfer variation in OASIS (refer [Section 13.5.5](#)) where this is available.

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- 2.5.5. Institutions must seek approval from SPs before inviting an awardee to undertake an Honours program. Institutions should provide the awardee's subject results when seeking approval.

- 2.5.6. Approval must be sought by the institution no later than three months before the awardee's scholarship completion date, to allow time for the SP to assess the request, including seeking Partner Government approval where relevant.

### Master degrees

- 2.5.7. The maximum duration for a Master degree program is two years.
- 2.5.8. Master degree programs may be offered by coursework, by research or by a combination of coursework and research. Masters by research or a combination of coursework and research should be offered only to those applicants who have demonstrated the need for high-level research skills in order to undertake research or teaching or to supervise researchers upon their return home.
- 2.5.9. Double Master degrees are permitted only when both are included in the institution's original offer and both courses can be completed within two years.

### Doctorate (PhD) programs

- 2.5.10. The maximum duration for a PhD is four years.
- 2.5.11. Study at doctorate level (PhD) may be subject to partner government approval. Normally, approval is given only where the applicant occupies, or is expected to occupy, a senior position requiring individual research or the supervision and training of other researchers in a research organisation (e.g. university or research centre) in the applicant's home country.

### Articulated study programs

- 2.5.12. An articulated study program is one that combines a lower and higher level course of study, leading to award of the higher qualification. Examples include a vocational course providing a direct pathway to a university undergraduate course of study; or a Graduate Diploma leading directly to a Masters, or a Masters leading directly to a PhD.
- 2.5.13. Scholarships are available for articulated study programs, subject to the relevant Country or Regional Profile, but must not comprise more than two courses or have a total duration in excess of the maximum duration permitted for the higher qualification (refer [Section 5.2.9](#)). Eg an articulated Masters program cannot take longer than two years and an articulated M>PhD cannot take longer than four years.

### Preparation programs

- 2.5.14. Preparation programs are courses deemed necessary by the institution to enable an awardee to successfully complete their qualification in the timeframe specified in the award offer. Such programs may be formal or informal, for example bridging courses or special intensive courses, and may not lead to a recognised qualification.
- 2.5.15. Preparation programs include:
- pre-course English (see [Section 2.3](#))
  - qualifying or preliminary programs for postgraduate awardees

- iii. foundation programs for undergraduate and vocational education and training awardees.
- 2.5.16. Preparation programs can be up to a maximum of 12 months. The total program of activities (i.e. a combination of the preparatory programs and the main course of studies) must not result in the scholarship duration being more than 12 months longer than the main course.

## 2.6. Types of courses for which Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships are not available

- 2.6.1. Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships are not available for:
- i. training in areas related to nuclear technology or flying aircraft
  - ii. military training
  - iii. training in counter-subversion methods, the suppression of political dissent or intelligence procurement.
- 2.6.2. Generally scholarships will not be available for courses of study where the applicant already has achieved that qualification and the qualification is deemed to be equivalent to the qualification at the same level.

## 2.7. Application process

- 2.7.1. The Country and Regional Profiles detail the opening and closing dates for applications and which method of application is acceptable for that country or region. Although all countries may not be able to receive applications via the online application facility in OASIS, encouraging this mode of application is suggested.

- 2.7.2. It is important that applicants read and fully understand and comply with the relevant Country or Regional Profile before submitting an application. Guidance for applicants on using the Online Application facility OASIS is at:



<http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/oasis-applicant-user-guide.aspx>

- 2.7.3. Applicants will need to supply a number of documents to support their scholarship application including, but not necessarily limited to:
- i. a certified copy of original formal degree graduation certificate (i.e. testamur) and, if not in English, a certified translation of the degree
  - ii. a certified copy of original formal academic transcript/s and, if not in English, a certified translation copy of the transcript/s
  - iii. a certified copy of a citizenship document (e.g. passport or national identity card)
  - iv. a certified copy of original birth certificate and, if not in English, a certified translation
  - v. a curriculum vitae (CV) briefly detailing work history and responsibilities (and

research experience, if relevant to the application)

- vi. referee reports: at least one academic referee report and at least one other referee report (e.g. a work supervisor). Masters by Research or PhD applicants should provide two academic referee reports. A template for the preferred format of a referee report is available at <http://aid.dfat.gov.au/australia-awards/Pages/how-to-apply.aspx>
- vii. a certified copy of original English language test (IELTS OR TOEFL) where required. Results certificate valid until 1 January of the year in which the studies will commence. (For example, as results are normally valid for two years, the test date would need to have been taken after 1 January 2013 for an application for a scholarship to commence studies in 2015)

## Document certification

- 2.7.4. Documents accompanying a scholarship application that require certification must be certified in accordance with the requirements below.
- 2.7.5. The original document has been sighted and the copy has been sworn to be a true copy of the original by an authorised person at one of the following:
  - i. the official records department of the institution that originally issued the document/s, or
  - ii. an Australian overseas diplomatic mission, or
  - iii. a Notary Public
  - iv. Justice of the Peace (JP).
- 2.7.6. The authorised person must:
  - i. write 'This is a certified true copy of the original document as sighted by me', and
  - ii. sign and print his/her name, address, contact telephone number, profession or occupation or organisation and the date verified, and
  - iii. include the official stamp or seal of the verifier's organisation on the copy, if the organisation has such a stamp.
- 2.7.7. Where an institution has specific document certification requirements, the awardee must meet the institution's requirements.

- 2.7.8. SPs may elect at which stage of the application or selection process they require correctly certified documents, provided that certified copies are included in each request for placement at an institution.

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- 2.7.9. Applicants cannot verify their own documents, even if they belong to one of the categories listed in [Section 2.7.8](#), and documents cannot be verified by a person directly related to the applicant. If an applicant has studied under a previous name, they must supply documentary evidence to prove their change of name, such as a marriage certificate, deed poll registration or other registration. The documentation must show their previous name/s and their current name/s.

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### 3. Fraud

- 3.1.1. DFAT takes all possible steps to ensure that Australian Government funds are used appropriately to deliver effective aid and development and treats all attempted, alleged, detected and suspected fraud seriously.
- 3.1.2. DFAT defines fraud as dishonestly obtaining a benefit, or causing a loss, by deception or other means. It cannot simply be due to a careless, accidental or an erroneous act.
- 3.1.3. The following could constitute fraud in the context of the Australia Awards:
  - i. false application supporting documents
  - ii. false information on forms
  - iii. not disclosing relevant information
  - iv. not disclosing a conflict of interest (e.g. relationship with decision-makers)
  - v. deliberately claiming a benefit not entitled to (e.g. reunion travel when dependent family members are residing with the awardee in the study country).
- 3.1.4. DFAT has a 'zero tolerance' attitude towards any attempts to gain a benefit fraudulently from the Australian Government. DFAT has the right to vary or reverse any decision regarding an Australia Award made on the basis of incorrect or incomplete information.
- 3.1.5. Applicants that provide suspected fraudulent documents will be excluded from the selection process until the documents are verified. If fraud is confirmed, the applicant will be ineligible to apply for further Australia Awards.

3.1.6. When submitting their application for an Australia Award, applicants are required to declare that the contents of their application are true and correct; and acknowledge that DFAT has the right to vary or reverse any decision regarding an Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship made on the basis of incorrect or incomplete information.



3.1.7. Institutions must report to the Sending Post via email when it detects or suspects that an awardee has committed fraud.



3.1.8. Program Areas must report to the Sending Post via email when it detects or suspects that an awardee has committed fraud.



## 4. Selection

### 4.1. Selection process and criteria

- 4.1.1. Posts manage the selection process in each country/region and the selection process is detailed in the relevant Country or Region Profile. The selection process should include an interview of short-listed candidates.
- 4.1.2. Selection of applicants will take into account the applicant's professional and personal qualities, academic competence and, most importantly, their potential to impact on development challenges in their home country. Each country or region may have additional selection criteria, which can be accessed in the relevant Country or Region Profile (<http://aid.dfat.gov.au/australia-awards/Pages/eligiblecountries.aspx>).
- 4.1.3. The table below is a guide for applicants to understand how Program Areas might score an applicant.

Outstanding: $\geq 90\%$	Outstanding application with a study program that has been very well developed in relation to its contribution to building leadership in support of home country's development; an outstanding candidate with strong academic capacity and demonstrated leadership capacities in strategic and inspirational thinking and practice, who is very likely to make a significant impact in their field of practice in home country and internationally.
Very good: $80\% \leq 89\%$	High quality application with a study program that has been well considered for its contributions to building leadership in support of home country's development; a highly capable candidate who has demonstrated promising leadership capacities in strategic and inspirational thinking and practice, who is likely to make a significant impact in their field of activity.
Good: $70\% \leq 79\%$	Worthy application with a relevant study program; a capable candidate who has demonstrated some promising leadership characteristics and is likely to complete the study program and make a sound contribution to their field of activity.
Satisfactory: $60\% \leq 69\%$	An adequate application with a relevant study program; a candidate that has demonstrated some initial leadership characteristics and is reasonably likely to complete the study program and make a contribution to their field of activity.
Limited: $< 60\%$	An application that has not been well thought through and has a high element of risk in relation to successful completion of the study program; a candidate with limited potential to contribute as a leader in their field



of activity.

- 4.1.4. Posts/Program Areas are responsible for selecting and awarding scholarships to the most suitable applicants. These are applicants who match the desired profile, who demonstrate a strong likelihood of succeeding in their studies and who will be able to contribute to development in areas being targeted by the country or regional strategy.

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## 4.2. Reintegration plans

- 4.2.1. Reintegration plans (also known as Development Impact Plans or Re-Entry Action Plans) are an effective tool to assist Program Areas, applicants, awardees and alumni at the selection, return-home and post-scholarship stages, and are strongly recommended as a best practice.

- 4.2.2. Awardees may be required to complete a reintegration plan at any stage of their scholarship, including as part of their scholarship application.

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- 4.2.3. The reintegration plan is a statement of intent by the applicant, setting out practical and realistic examples of tasks on which they plan to apply the skills and knowledge gained through their studies and the possible constraints they think could prevent them from achieving these tasks.

- 4.2.4. Program Areas may include reintegration plans as part of the application and selection process and require all applicants to complete a reintegration plan to help selection panels identify which candidates have well thought through approaches for using their new skills on return to their home country.

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- 4.2.5. Program Areas may include the applicant's/awardee's employer as a party to the plan, particularly where the employer is holding the awardee's position open, and where there is a strong human resource development priority for the Country Program's Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships.

## 4.3. Successful and reserve applicants

- 4.3.1. The Scholarship selection process in each country (or, in some cases, in the region) will result in a list of successful candidates equal to the number of scholarships available for the country or region, and in most instances a list of reserve candidates ranked in order.
- 4.3.2. Successful candidates become awardees once their placement at an institution has been processed and the candidate has signed the Scholarship contract with the Commonwealth of Australia.

- 4.3.3. Posts should select reserve candidates where they are high quality and should ensure that reserve candidates continue to meet all eligibility criteria and be deemed suitable for placement in the event that a successful candidate's institution placement is rejected, or the candidate declines the award

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offer.

#### 4.4. Advising applicants of selection outcomes

- 4.4.1. SPs will inform successful applicants of the outcomes of their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships selection process.

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## 5. Placement

### 5.1. Request for placement and placement offers

- 5.1.1. After the selection of awardees is finalised, the Posts use OASIS to request placements for successful applicants at their first preference institution and course.
- 5.1.2. Requests for placement are assessed by institutions on merit. An institution will process a placement offer only where the awardee meets the institution's admission requirements and is assessed as being capable of successfully completing the nominated course within the specified period.
- i. for placements of awardees with disability, additional considerations and requirements apply (see [Chapter 9](#)).
- 5.1.3. DFAT reserves the right to reject a placement offer made by an institution or to withdraw a placement request if submitted in error.

- 5.1.4. Successful applicants selected to undertake a PhD or Masters by Research will need to provide Program Areas with a well-developed research proposal to submit to the institution as part of the Request for Placement process. The proposal should include a proposed methodology, timeline and a brief literature review.

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- 5.1.5. SPs should initiate requests for placement in OASIS **by late November for first semester** commencement and **by early May for second semester** commencement. Posts/Program Areas are to ensure that when submitting a request for placement to an institution:
- i. it is compliant with any country specific conditions set by the partner government, and
- ii. the following has been uploaded or recorded in OASIS:
- properly certified supporting documentation
  - the awardee's emergency contact details
  - the dependants' information, where relevant
  - the awardee's passport number and expiry date.
- iii. for PhD awardees, the following has been uploaded into OASIS:
- the supporting documents outlined at [Section 2.7.3](#).
- 5.1.6. If the institution requests further information from SPs to process the request for

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placement, SPs must respond promptly to enable the institution's final response to the request for placement to be sent in accordance with the timeframes outlined in [Section 5.1.5](#).

- 5.1.7. If an applicant's first preference is declined by an institution, the SPs may decide to approach the second or other preferred institution. The SPs will liaise with the next preferred institution on that institution's requirements. The second preference institution will process the request for placement in OASIS in line with the process and timeframe outlined in [Section 5.1.9 – 5.1.12](#).
- 5.1.8. If a successful applicant cannot be placed in any of their preferred courses, the SPs must advise the applicant's nominating authority and the applicant (as appropriate) that no placement can be offered. In such circumstances, the SPs will withdraw the offer, and may then request a placement for a reserve applicant.

- 5.1.9. Institutions must respond to complete placement requests received in OASIS:
- i. within 15 business days for coursework studies
  - ii. within 30 business days for research studies.
- 5.1.10. The institution may respond to a placement request in OASIS by:
- i. declining to offer a place at the institution and stating the reasons why
  - ii. offering a place conditionally
  - iii. offering a place unconditionally.
- 5.1.11. If the institution requires further information from the Program Area to process the placement, the institution must respond to the request for placement as soon as possible so as to attempt to meet the timeframe as at [Section 5.1.9](#).
- 5.1.12. If the institution does not respond to a completed request within the stipulated timeframe the Program Area may withdraw with placement from that institution at its discretion.
- 5.1.13. The institution should ensure placement offers include:
- i. the Introductory Academic Program
  - ii. the awardee's nominated course (reflecting any credit for previous study or recognition of prior learning that may reduce the length of time needed to complete the course)
  - iii. any preparatory programs deemed necessary by the institution
  - iv. any other compulsory courses or course elements (e.g. fieldwork, work attachments, first aid course, occupational health and safety course, etc.)
  - v. course costs and scholarship entitlements, as required (see [Chapter 10](#))
  - vi. any conditions of the offer
  - vii. additional information about the placement offer that the successful applicant should be aware of when signing the offer and contract, such as courses that are delivered in a non-standard mode (i.e. intensive mode or at more than one institution).

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## 5.2. Preparation programs

- 5.2.1. Preparation programs are courses deemed necessary by the institution to enable an awardee to successfully complete their qualification in the timeframe specified in by the institution. Such programs may be formal or informal, for example bridging courses or special intensive courses, and may not lead to a recognised qualification.
- 5.2.2. Preparatory programs include:
- pre-course English (see [Section 2.3.7 – 2.3.9](#))
  - qualifying or preliminary programs for postgraduate awardees
  - Foundation programs for undergraduate and vocational education and training awardees.

5.2.3. Institutions may recommend preparatory programs that run for up to a maximum of 12 months. The total program of activities (i.e. a combination of the preparatory programs and the main course of studies) must not result in the scholarship duration being more than 12 months longer than the main course.

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### Foundation programs

- 5.2.4. A foundation program of up to 12 months may be offered by the institution to vocational education and training and undergraduate applicants if the institution assesses that the awardee does not meet the required standard for direct entry into their chosen course.
- 5.2.5. Awardees may also attend in-country foundation programs as part of their scholarship program.
- 5.2.6. Approval from the SP must be sought if there is likely to be more than a two week break between completion of the preparatory program and the main course of study at any time other than normal session breaks.

5.2.7. Awardees undertaking preparatory programs should commence their main course of study as soon as the preparatory program is completed. Awardees must achieve satisfactory results in their preparation program to continue their award, including preparatory programs undertaken in-country. Failure to achieve satisfactory results may result in termination of the award.

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5.2.8. Upon receiving a request for placement, institutions should assess whether the awardee will require a preparation program to successfully complete their qualification in the timeframe specified by the institution. Preparation programs should be included in the initial placement offer. If the institution later assesses that a shorter period of preparation is adequate, the institution must reduce the overall length of the award in OASIS through a reduction variation towards the end of the award period (see [Section 13.7](#)).

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## Multi-country and multi-campus study

- 5.2.9 For the Bachelor of Laws (LLB program) at the University of the South Pacific (USP) the main course of study will change. The Emalus campus, Vanuatu will be the initial primary campus for the LLB component. On completion of the degree (LLB) students must transfer to the Laucala campus, Fiji to undertake the Professional Diploma in Legal Practice (PDLP) which completes the qualification. Recently the Alafua campus, Samoa has also offered the PDLP where Samoan students attend after completing the LLB. In both these cases, as the campus offering the course of study changes, so does the primary campus. The primary campus will be responsible for the contractual obligations with DFAT.
- 5.2.10 The primary institution needs to ensure that both courses comprising the articulated program are identified (and entered into OASIS) as part of the scholarship offer.
- 5.2.11 Conjoint or combined degrees (eg B Com/LLB) at USP are permitted by some Posts and partner governments. As the Laucala campus is the main campus for USP it will be deemed the primary campus. The primary campus will be responsible for the contractual obligations with DFAT and the OASIS processes. Note that the PDLP may mean that awardees will return to the Laucala campus.

## Reviewing a placement offer and issuing a letter of offer

- 5.2.9. Posts are responsible for reviewing an institution's placement offer, and issuing the letter of offer, along with the scholarship contract to the successful applicant, and recording the applicant's acceptance (or rejection) of the offer in OASIS. OASIS will send an email alert to the institution advising of this decision.

- 5.2.10. SPs should review a placement offer from an institution, and request further information or clarification if required, to ensure that it contains the information as outlined at [Section 5.1.13](#).
- 5.2.11. Once the SP has reviewed the placement offer and is satisfied that it meets the requirements above, the Post must:
- generate a letter of offer and contract in OASIS, ensuring that specific conditions required by the institution are included
  - send the letter of offer and contract to the successful applicant to sign
  - upload the signed contract into OASIS once it is received from the applicant
  - record the acceptance (or rejection) of the placement offer in OASIS.

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## 6. Accepting the scholarship and its conditions

### 6.1. Accepting the scholarship

6.1.1. A scholarship is only offered once an applicant's placement offer is finalised. Upon signing the scholarship contract, applicants become awardees.

6.1.2. Successful applicants will receive a scholarship letter of offer and contract from the SP in their country. To accept the scholarship and its conditions, the successful applicant must read and sign the contract between themselves and the Commonwealth of Australia and return it to the SP.



## 6.2. Scholarship conditions

6.2.1. In accepting the scholarship, awardees agree to the following scholarship conditions:

### Obligations

The awardee agrees that they must:

- i. commence the Scholarship in the academic year for which it is offered, unless DFAT has agreed to defer the commencement of the awardee's studies until DFAT is satisfied that the awardee is ready to do so
- ii. participate in the pre-departure briefing arranged by the SP and participate in the institution's compulsory Introductory Academic Program when the awardee arrives in the study country
- iii. undertake only the approved course of study for which the Scholarship is offered, abide by the rules of the institution, submit all assessment items required for the course and sit examinations, and complete the awardee's course of study and the Scholarship by the end date
- iv. obey the laws that apply in the study country and act in a manner that will not bring disrepute to DFAT, and
- v. leave the study country (where applicable) for a minimum of two years at the end of, or termination of, the awardee's Scholarship and acknowledge that any time spent outside the home country during the two year exclusion period will extend the end date of the exclusion period.

### For the duration of the Scholarship the awardee must:

- vi. maintain a full time program of study at all times unless approved by DFAT
- vii. make satisfactory academic progress as determined by DFAT and the institution
- viii. reside in the study country for the duration of the Scholarship (apart from holidays, reunion visits or fieldwork visits which have been approved by DFAT)
- ix. maintain a clear and direct line of communication with DFAT through the Regional Scholarships Team (RST), recognising that the RST is the first point of contact for the awardees dealing with DFAT at the institution, and
- x. work with DFAT and RST if a welfare or critical incident occurs, keeping the RP informed in case their assistance is required.

### Visa

- xi. The awardee agrees to satisfy all visa requirements determined by the study

country. Information on this can be obtained from the SP.

- xii. The awardee should get information from the SP on arrangements for family accompaniment to the study country.
- xiii. The awardee should advise the RST if they apply, including as part of a joint or family application, for a visa for permanent residence in Australia or New Zealand. The awardee will acknowledge that if they do, then their Scholarship will be terminated, and they will incur a debt to the Commonwealth of Australia of the total accrued cost of their scholarship.

### **Financial obligations**

- xiv. The awardee acknowledges that the awardee is responsible for all costs that occur during the Scholarship period that are not covered by the Scholarship benefits.
- xv. The awardee acknowledges that the awardee is responsible for how they budget any Scholarship benefits the awardee receives to pay their living expenses.
- xvi. The awardee agrees to repay all Scholarship benefits the awardee receives, as a debt due and owing to the Commonwealth of Australia if:
  - the awardee does not leave the study country at the end of the Scholarship, or
  - if the awardee applies for anything other than a short-term temporary visa to return to Australia within two years of completion of the Scholarship.

### **Medical expenses**

- xvii. The awardee acknowledges that the awardee's medical cover entitlement may not cover all medical expenses, and that the awardee is liable for any additional expenses incurred by them during their Scholarship.
- xviii. There is no medical cover entitlement for dependants of awardees.

### **Other scholarships and studies**

- xix. The awardee will not hold another Australian Government scholarship, at the same time as the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship, or begin studying another course.
- xx. The awardee will not undertake any additional off scholarship studies during their time in the study country.

### **Change of circumstances**

- xxi. The awardee will advise DFAT immediately, via the Regional Scholarships Team (RST) at the institution, of any personal, financial or family circumstances or incidents (e.g. family or financial problems, medical conditions, etc.) that might affect the awardee's ability to commence the Scholarship on time or to complete the approved course of study within the Scholarship period.
- xxii. The awardee will advise DFAT immediately, via the RST at the institution, if the awardee marries or is in a de facto relationship with a person who is an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or is a permanent resident in Australia or New Zealand,



acknowledging that the awardee needs to comply with the Scholarship conditions and visa conditions even if the awardee's marital status changes.

#### **Changes to Scholarship or course of study**

- xxiii. The awardee will discuss with the RST at the institution any proposed changes to the approved course of study for which the Scholarship is offered.
- xxiv. The awardee will obtain approval from the institution, DFAT and, in some instances, the partner government before making any changes to the course of study.
- xxv. The awardee acknowledges that DFAT may amend the period of the Scholarship or Scholarship benefits at its discretion.

#### **Termination and Suspension of Scholarship**

- xxvi. The awardee acknowledges that the awardee holds the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship with DFAT's support and DFAT reserves its right to terminate the Scholarship and withdraw its support at any time, including if the awardee:
  - does not comply with a condition of the Scholarship
  - does not make successful academic progress and remedial strategies have not been successful
  - is excluded by the institution from the course or study units due to academic failure or from remaining at the institution because of misconduct (as defined by the institution)
  - completes the maximum period of English language training available under the scholarship and still has insufficient English language ability for entry to the main course of study
  - is unable to continue a program due to serious illness or incapacity for medical/mental health reasons
  - conducts themselves in a manner which is considered to have transgressed acceptable Australian community standards
  - is found to have committed an act of fraud
  - applies for a visa for permanent residence in Australia or New Zealand.
- xxvii. The awardee acknowledges that DFAT reserves the right to suspend the Scholarship, including if:
  - DFAT determines that the awardee is unable to continue their course or study, or
  - is unable to continue a course or study due to serious illness or incapacity due to medical or mental health reasons.
- xxviii. The awardee acknowledges that the Scholarship will be suspended until the awardee can demonstrate that the awardee is able to undertake full time study, acknowledging that DFAT will determine when the Scholarship re-commences.
- xxix. if the awardee's scholarship is suspended the awardee will return to their home country (with any dependants) for the duration of the suspension and will seek the prior approval of DFAT and the institution before returning to the study country. Relocation costs for the awardee only are covered by the award.



## Privacy

- xxx. The awardee also acknowledges that the awardee is aware that:
- the Privacy Act 1988 governs the handling of personal information by Australian Government agencies (<http://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-act/the-privacy-act>), and
  - DFAT's privacy policy is available at <http://www.dfat.gov.au/privacy.html>.
- xxxi. The awardee consents to their personal information and that of their family members and dependants, including sensitive information as defined in the Privacy Act 1988, being collected, handled, used and disclosed by and exchanged between DFAT, other government agencies including the study country's immigration authorities, tertiary institutions in the study country, partner organisations (including managing contractors and sub-contractors), medical insurers, medical practitioners, case managers, the home government (where applicable) and other parties, in the circumstances outlined, and for the purposes indicated, in the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships Policy Handbook as updated from time to time.
- xxxii. The awardee acknowledges that DFAT may disclose their personal information to their home government or another overseas recipient, such as a family member nominated by awardees and that DFAT will not take any steps to ensure their home government or any other overseas recipient does not breach the Australian Privacy Principles under the Privacy Act before disclosing their personal information to them, and awardees consent to DFAT disclosing the information on that basis.
- xxxiii. The awardee acknowledges that the purpose of any such exchange or disclosure of personal and sensitive information is to enable DFAT and others to properly manage the Australian Awards Pacific Scholarship and any welfare incidents or critical incidents affecting awardees and their scholarship conditions.
- xxxiv. The awardee acknowledges that from time to time the Australian Government may produce media releases in the study country and in the awardee's home country and circulate information to DFAT's offshore Program Areas and Pacific education institutions in hard copy and on the Internet in relation to the Scholarship or other development activities (promotional material), and
- xxxv. The awardee consents to DFAT, Australian Ministers and Australian Government agencies collecting, exchanging, using and disclosing information about the awardee including, but not limited to, their academic background, their study program in the Pacific and their professional achievements either before or after receiving the Scholarship, and including it in such promotional material.

## 6.3. Child protection

- 6.3.1. DFAT has clear and strict policies in relation to managing and reducing risks of child abuse. The policy applies to all recipients of DFAT funds. DFAT takes a zero-tolerance approach to any infringement.

For more information on DFAT's Child Protection Policy, see <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/child-protection-policy.aspx>

6.3.2.

6.3.3. Awardees must sign the DFAT Child Protection Code of Conduct section of their scholarship contract.

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6.3.4. Posts must ensure that they provide a copy of the DFAT Child Protection Policy with the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship offer and contract, and that awardees have signed the Child Protection Code of Conduct section of their scholarship contract.

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## 6.4. Deferring an offer

6.4.1. An Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship may be deferred to allow the awardee to commence at a later date within the academic year for which the scholarship is offered. A deferral to commence at a later date, but not more than 12 months after original commencement date, may be approved for a variety of reasons including pregnancy, visa issues and family or work responsibilities.

6.4.2. Awardees requesting a deferral must do so after they have accepted their scholarship and signed their scholarship contract, and before they arrive in the study country. Awardees who wish to defer should contact the relevant Program Area as soon as possible after receiving the scholarship offer. After the deferral period, Awardees who commence their scholarship study program will be entitled to the conditions and entitlements at the time of signing their contract with DFAT.

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6.4.3. Awardees should be aware that in some cases, the SP or the institution may request or require a deferral of their scholarship, for example to ensure that awardees with disability are mobilised successfully and have access to all necessary support and reasonable adjustments (see [Chapter 9](#) for more information.) Awardees will be consulted where a deferral is contemplated. DFAT has the final decision on deferred start dates.

6.4.4. Only Program Areas, in consultation with partner governments where relevant, are able to approve a scholarship deferral. Program Areas are responsible for processing the deferral variation in OASIS.

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6.4.5. Institutions may propose deferring a scholarship commencement date until a later session if more time is required for the institution to put in place reasonable adjustments for an awardee with disability (see [Chapter 9](#)) or if the awardee will not be able to arrive in the study country in time to start on the course start date.


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## 7. Pre-departure

### 7.1. Pre-departure information

- 7.1.1. Pre-departure briefings provide essential information that awardees need when they arrive in the study country to commence their studies, such as advice about living and studying in the study country. The briefings are also an opportunity to provide information about award conditions, including entitlements and obligations, such as the requirement that Awardees leave the study country and return to their home country for a minimum period of two years after completing their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship.
- 7.1.2. The briefing helps awardees to settle into the study country and their institution quickly, making it easier for them to complete their studies within the timeframe provided in their contract.

- 7.1.3. It is compulsory for awardees to participate in a pre-departure briefing. 
- 7.1.4. Family members of awardees, especially those who expect to accompany them to the study country, are encouraged to participate in the briefing. The costs for family members to attend the briefing must be covered by awardees, but some Program Areas may subsidise these costs.

- 7.1.5. The institution: 
- i. should provide each awardee with an institution information kit before they depart for the study country
  - ii. must forward the kit directly to the awardee to arrive at the earliest possible time and no later than 14 days before the awardee departs for the study country
  - iii. may liaise directly with Program Areas to distribute the kit to an awardee if this helps ensure the kit reaches the awardee.
- 7.1.6. Institutions should also provide information kits to the RP and the Program Areas on request.
- 7.1.7. As a minimum, the institution information kit should include information that will assist awardees in the study destination; any information required under the contract with DFAT, and other information the institution deems relevant e.g. reception information, climate details, long-term accommodation options, living costs, course details, support services at the institution, including disability support services at the institution and in the community, local childcare and schooling options, and information about public transport.

- 7.1.8. Program Areas must: 
- i. provide the pre-departure briefing preferably one month before the awardee departs for the study country
  - ii. arrange and cover the costs for awardees to attend this briefing

iii. provide all relevant Scholarship information to awardees as early as possible after they accept their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship offer. These resources will assist awardees to prepare for their arrival, and to make the most of the opportunity to live and study in the study country.

7.1.9. As part of the pre-departure briefing, Program Areas are required to ensure that awardees understand that, while on scholarship, they are bound by laws of the study country. Program Areas must explain that legal frameworks may be different to an awardee's home country, particularly in relation to domestic and gender violence.

## 7.2. Family

7.2.1. The Australian Government provides a Contribution to Living Expenses (CLE) at the accompanied rate for the dependants of awardees.

7.2.2. Applicants must identify at the scholarship application stage if they intend to bring family members with them to the study country.

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7.2.3. The accompanied rate is designed to contribute to the support of two adults and two children. The CLE may need to be subsidised by the Awardee for larger families so awardees are financially responsible for their family members who accompany them to the study country.

7.2.4. Awardees are not permitted to leave their dependant children who accompany them to the study country, under 18 years of age, on their own during any awardee's absence from the study country during their scholarship without arranging a guardian to care for them.

7.2.5. Awardees who intend to bring family with them are encouraged to come to the study country on their own for at least the first six months. This will allow the awardee to attend the Introductory Academic Program (see [Section 12.1](#)) and become established in their program of studies without the distraction of family responsibilities.

7.2.6. The accompanied rate of CLE is not paid for the period of IAP; the unaccompanied rate only is paid. When dependants join the Awardee **after the completion** of the IAP then the payment at the accompanied rate will commence.

7.2.7. If awardees choose to be accompanied by dependants during the IAP the awardee should be prepared to provide financial support for dependants. Awardees will be paid at the unaccompanied rate even though they are accompanied by family.

7.2.8. Institutions are responsible for providing documentation requested by the Sending Posts to ensure visas for accompanying family are arranged in an efficient and timely manner.

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## 8. Visas

### 8.1. Visa requirements for awardees

- 8.1.1. Awardees need to ensure that they are clear on all visa arrangements for the study country including any documents that might be required. This information should be provided by both the Sending and the Receiving Posts.

- 8.1.2. Awardees must ensure they have a valid passport and visa for the entire duration of their scholarship.

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### 8.2. Visa requirements for accompanying dependent family members

- 8.2.1. Awardees must declare all dependent family members on their visa application, even if the family members do not plan to join the awardee in the study country.
- 8.2.2. An awardee's accompanying dependent family members must satisfy all visa requirements for the study country in order to travel to and remain in the study country for the duration of the awardee's study.
- 8.2.3. Awardees are responsible for all costs associated with the visa requirements for their dependants.

### 8.3. Visa requirements for awardees with disability

- 8.3.1. Depending on the study country, awardees with disability may need to have other visa requirements to travel to and study in the study country.
- 8.3.2. All information relating to this will be provided by the Sending and Receiving Posts and/or institutions.
- 8.3.3. All parties should be aware that it may take a longer period of time to assess visa applications for awardees with disability.

- 8.3.4. SPs are required to directly assist awardees with disability with their visa applications in order to ensure that all the information required to make a determination in a timely manner is provided.
- 8.3.5. SPs should assist awardees with disability begin the process of submitting a visa application.

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- 8.3.6. Awardees with disability are required to work closely with the SP on their visa applications.

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- 8.3.7. Awardees with disability should inform the SP immediately if the institution requests additional information or letters of support.

## 8.4. Visa requirements for the carer of an awardee with disability

- 8.4.1. Some awardees with disability will be assessed as requiring a carer for all or part of their scholarship. In these cases Program Areas and awardees will consider whether a carer from their home-country should accompany the awardee to the study country. This decision may have visa implications which need to be considered.
- 8.4.2. If a full-time carer is accompanying an awardee for the duration of their scholarship, the carer may need to apply for a Visa.
- 8.4.3. If a carer is accompanying an awardee to provide short-term, part-time or settling-in-care, the Sending Post will advise the most appropriate type of visa after being advised by Receiving Post.

8.4.4. Awardees with disability should discuss with the Sending Post as part of their disability assessment whether they require the support of a carer for all or part of their scholarship period in the study country. See [Chapter 9](#) for further information about disability assessments.

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8.4.5. Sending Posts are required to liaise with the awardee, the carer, and the Receiving Post in-country to ensure that carers apply for the most appropriate visa for their case.

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8.4.6. Sending Posts should work closely with the Receiving Post in-country on these visa applications and they may be required to provide letters of support or additional information to assist with visa applications for carers.

## 8.5. Visa obligations

8.5.1. Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship awardees sign a contract between themselves and the Commonwealth of Australia to comply with the conditions and benefits of the scholarship. A condition of their scholarship is that they will leave the study country for two years on its completion or termination. This condition supports the objectives of Australia's aid program by ensuring that the applicant directs the knowledge and expertise acquired during their scholarship to capacity building in their home country.

8.5.2. Awardees must uphold the visa conditions of the study country while studying and living in the study country or the visa may be cancelled and the scholarship terminated.

8.5.3. Awardees are required to leave the study country and return to their home country within 30 days of their scholarship end date, or before their visa expires, whichever comes first. Awardees that do not adhere to this requirement will no longer be supported by DFAT after their scholarship end date.

8.5.4. The Receiving Post will advise, if necessary, the Department of Immigration in the

study country that it has withdrawn support for an awardee's visa from 30 days after the end date of the awardee's Australia Awards Scholarship.

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- 8.5.5. Awardees should note that in many cases the scholarship conditions overlap with visa conditions. Breaching the visa conditions, may result in cancellation of their visa and termination of their scholarship. Similarly, if an awardee breaches the conditions of their scholarship, DFAT may withdraw its support for their visa.

- 8.5.6. An institution must notify the Receiving Post immediately by email if it becomes aware of an awardee who is not upholding their visa obligations.

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- 8.5.7. When an awardee does not uphold the conditions of their visa, the Receiving Post will advise the awardee that their scholarship is to be terminated and will also notify, if necessary, the Department of Immigration in the study country that DFAT has withdrawn its support for the visa.

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## 8.6. Applying for a further student visa (extension)

- 8.6.1. In circumstances where an extension to an awardee's scholarship has been approved by DFAT, the awardee must apply for a further visa to stay in the study country, if necessary beyond their initial visa expiry date. DFAT must indicate its support by providing a letter of no objection to the awardee to include in their visa application to the relevant Authority.

## 8.7. Two-year exclusion rule

- 8.7.1. It is a condition of Australia Awards policy that awardees do not apply to travel to Australia, for anything other than short-term visits, for a minimum period of two years following completion or termination of the scholarship and taking up employment, unless DFAT supports the return.
- 8.7.2. The calculation of the two-year exclusion period is cumulative and calculated from the time of employment commencement. Any time spent in Australia during the two-year period will be added to the exclusion period.

- 8.7.3. An awardee must gain support from the Sending Post if seeking to travel to Australia for a period longer than three months within the two-year exclusion period.

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- 8.7.4. Sending Post will provide an awardee with a letter of no objection if Program Areas support the awardee's short-term visit to Australia within the two year exclusion period.

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## 8.8. Early completion of the scholarship

- 8.8.1. When a scholarship is terminated or studies are completed ahead of schedule, DFAT discontinues the financial support for the awardee.



8.8.2. The institution must advise the Receiving Post of a revised scholarship end date through OASIS and advise the awardee that they will need to book their completion travel to depart the study country within 30 days of their scholarship end date.

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8.8.3. The Sending Post will advise the necessary Authorities that it has withdrawn support for the awardees visa from 30 days after the end date of the awardee's Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship.

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## 8.9. Debt to the Commonwealth

8.9.1. Awardees will incur a debt to the Commonwealth if they do not return to their home country or apply for a visa to travel to Australia long term after the end of their scholarship and within the two-year exclusion period. The amount of the debt will be the accrued costs of the Scholarship.

8.9.2. Due to privacy legislation and requirements, DFAT will not discuss an awardee's debt to the Commonwealth with a third party (who is not relevant to the scholarship) unless the awardee provides written consent for DFAT to do so.

8.9.3. After consultation with the Sending and Receiving Posts, the Scholarships and Alumni Branch will advise the awardee of the accrued costs of their scholarship (being the debt payable by the awardee). When the awardee has made satisfactory arrangements with DFAT's Finance section to repay the debt and has made an initial payment, DFAT will provide a letter of no objection to the awardee.

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8.9.4. If the awardee is not willing or able to enter into a satisfactory repayment arrangement or DFAT determines that the awardee does not have the ability to repay the debt

- i) the Scholarships and Alumni Branch will advise the Department of Immigration and Border Protection that it does not support the awardee's visa application; and
- ii) the Sending Post will advise the awardee's partner government of the situation.

8.9.5. The awardee must advise DFAT (RP) in writing within 14 days of receiving the advice of their debt whether they intend to proceed with their visa application and, if so, that they will make arrangements with DFAT's Finance section to repay the debt.

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8.9.6. If an awardee with a debt stops making repayments, DFAT will notify the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

8.9.7. DFAT does not have authority under the Australian Government's Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 to waive a debt to the Commonwealth. Only the Minister for Finance and Deregulation is able to



make these decisions under the Act. Guidance on how to apply for a waiver can be found at

<http://www.finance.gov.au/resource-management/discretionary-financial-assistance/waiver-of-debt-mechanism/information-for-applicants-debt-waiver/>

## 9. Awardees with disability

### 9.1. Support for people with disability

- 9.1.1. There are specific strategic goals for the Australian aid program that relate to people with disability and DFAT's Development for All strategy aims to ensure that people with disability are included in and benefit equally from Australia's development assistance.
- 9.1.2. This commitment is fully reflected in the Australia Awards program. DFAT strives to ensure accessibility for people with disability throughout the scholarship process from application, through selection, pre-departure activities, the on-award experience, scholarship completion and alumni engagement.
- 9.1.3. DFAT's aim is that all applicants and awardees with disability are properly supported to enable their participation in the Australia Awards program on an equal basis with all other applicants and awardees.
- 9.1.4. Under Australian law, disability includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological and learning disability, physical disfigurement, and the presence in the body of disease-causing organisms. More information on the Australian definition of disability and the rights of people with disability is available on the Australian Human Rights Commission's website at <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights>

### 9.2. Applicants with disability

- 9.2.1. People with disability who are otherwise eligible are encouraged to apply for an Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship.

- 9.2.2. DFAT strongly recommends that applicants with disability:
  - i. disclose their disability when lodging an application
  - ii. communicate to SP any adjustments or assistance they will need to attend and participate, before attending a selection interview.



- 9.2.3. Program Areas will:
  - i. Encourage people with disability, who are otherwise eligible for an Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship, to apply.
  - ii. Ensure that applicants with disability are able to fully participate in the application and selection processes by providing reasonable adjustments and additional



assistance.

- iii. Provide reasonable financial assistance to applicants with disability where this assistance is essential to facilitate their participation on an equal basis with other applicants.

- 9.2.4. All applicants for an Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship, including people with disability, are required to meet the eligibility criteria set out in Sections 2.1 through 2.3.
- 9.2.5. DFAT will always work in good faith to provide access to the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships for people with disability. However, in some very rare cases, applicants may not be selected if the disability support required to enable their participation would impose an unjustifiable burden on the Australia Awards Scholarships program.

### 9.3. Principles for providing disability support for Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship awardees

- 9.3.1. DFAT and institutions should provide reasonable adjustment to allow awardees with disability to participate in Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships on an equal basis (see [Section 9.5](#) for further guidance on reasonable adjustments).
- 9.3.2. The support needs of each awardee with disability will be different, as will the nature of the reasonable adjustments that are necessary and appropriate. The needs of each awardee with disability should be assessed on a case-by-case basis well before they are mobilised to begin their studies.
- 9.3.3. As not all support needs will be evident before the mobilisation of awardees with disability, DFAT is flexible in the provision of reasonable adjustments and will reassess support needs if required after an awardee has commenced their scholarship.
- 9.3.4. Standard scholarship entitlements, for which all awardees are eligible (such as contribution to living expenses and supplementary academic support), should not be used to fund disability support. Additional funds for disability support will be allocated on a needs basis following a disability assessment. See [Section 9.4](#) for further guidance on disability assessments.
- 9.3.5. The earlier institutions are involved in preparations for mobilisation, the more likely it is that an awardee with disability will be able to participate on an equal basis with other AAPS holders.

- 9.3.6. While DFAT respects every awardee's right to privacy, awardees with disability are encouraged to fully disclose their support needs as early as possible. Awardees are the best source of information on what support they need to live, study and travel, what has worked for them in the past and what support they anticipate they will need. The capacity to provide reasonable adjustments is limited by an awardee's willingness to engage in a disability assessment and disclose their needs and expectations.

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## 9.4. Assessing disability support needs

- 9.4.1. Reasonable adjustments for awardees with disability will only be provided by both DFAT and institutions, after a full and thorough disability assessment of each awardee. This ensures that the support provided is both necessary and appropriate.
- 9.4.2. A disability assessment is the process through which an awardee with disability, Program Areas and the relevant institution assess and discuss the awardee's support needs and reasonable adjustments that will be required. A disability assessment will involve discussions and assessment forms and should clarify the required level of support for pre-departure, during travel and for living and studying.
- 9.4.3. Disability assessments should begin before placement and may continue after awardees have arrived in the study country as this enables DFAT and institutions to provide effective and efficient reasonable adjustments and gives awardees the greatest chance of successfully completing their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship. However, additional disability assessments can be conducted after an awardee arrives in the study country.
- 9.4.4. If a disability assessment identifies that an awardee requires additional financial support from DFAT, this support will be formalised in a disability support agreement. This agreement will detail all additional financial support to be provided by DFAT. This agreement acts as an addendum to an awardee's scholarship contract and does not change any of the obligations in the scholarship contract.

### 9.4.5. Awardees with disability will:

- i. work closely with Program Areas and institutions to complete a disability assessment and a disability support agreement (if required).
- ii. note that the process of conducting a disability assessment will require DFAT to share information about an awardee's disability and support needs with the relevant institution and relevant disability service providers. This information is bound by Australian privacy laws and will be disclosed only for the purpose of facilitating equal access to education for awardees with disability.
- iii. provide a full medical report (no more than two years old and in English) that establishes the nature of the disability and fully discloses to DFAT and the institution all pre-existing medical conditions. This is a requirement to assess the need for reasonable adjustments and to ensure awardees with disability have adequate medical cover.
- iv. understand that disability assessments may take considerable time and that their cooperation is essential to the efficient and effective implementation of reasonable adjustments.
- v. work closely with Sending Post and institution to provide expertise on the support of awardees with disability.
- vi. understand that in some cases DFAT will be required to defer awardees with disability to a later scholarship start date in order to ensure that all necessary and

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appropriate reasonable adjustments can be put in place.

9.4.6. When a request for placement of an awardee with disability is lodged institutions will:

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- i. work closely with Program Areas to help ensure that the awardee will be fully supported while studying with all necessary and appropriate reasonable adjustments (both academic and non-academic)
- ii. alert the institution's disability support unit as early as possible and engage them in the process of assessing the awardee's needs

9.4.7. Institutions must monitor the progress of all on-scholarship awardees with disability closely and inform DFAT if they require additional assistance to participate equally with other students.

9.4.8. Program Areas will:

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- i. make institutions aware that they are seeking placement of an awardee with disability as soon as the disability is disclosed
- ii. ensure awardees with disability meet the placement requirements of their chosen institution
- iii. allow RST time to consult with other parts of the institution, including the disability unit to ensure that the necessary support is available
- iv. conduct a full and thorough disability assessment with each successful awardee with disability before mobilisation
- v. hold discussions with the RST and disability unit at the relevant institution as part of a disability assessment. Discussions with the institution should cover any additional assistance that an awardee with disability may require for living and studying before they arrive on-campus. If at all possible, the awardee should be directly involved in these discussions
- vi. understand that putting reasonable adjustments in place may take considerable time and that, if an institution is not ready, Program Areas may be required to defer awardees with disability to a later scholarship start date
- vii. recommend an alternative institution where an institution is not able to provide the necessary assistance for an awardee with disability
- viii. finalise the placement of an awardee with disability only after agreeing, between DFAT, the awardee and the institution, on the nature of the support and reasonable adjustments required and who will provide them
- ix. if required, before mobilisation of the awardee, Suva Post with assistance from SCB, prepare a disability support agreement to be signed by DFAT, the awardee and any relevant third parties
- x. assist awardees with disability with the visa application requirements including, but not limited to, meeting the costs of obtaining medical reports if required
- xi. enable awardees to provide and/or acquire a medical report (less than two years

old and in English) that establishes the nature of the disability and fully discloses any pre-existing conditions

- xii. provide additional pre-mobilisation assistance, for example during placement help awardees with disability select a suitable institution liaising with the relevant RST to locate accessible housing
- xiii. upload an awardee's disability assessment and disability support agreement (if applicable) in OASIS before mobilisation
- xiv. before the end of an awardee with disability's first study period (semester or trimester) make contact with them to discuss the level of support they are experiencing and address any problems that may have arisen.

## 9.5 Reasonable adjustments

- 9.5.1 Reasonable adjustments are measures which an education provider is required to make to ensure students with a disability can meet the academic standards of their course of study and participate on the same basis as students without a disability. Reasonable adjustments might include changes to the way a person enrolls in a course, alterations to the physical environment and other facilities, and changes to the way training is delivered and skills are assessed.

- 9.4.9. Awardees must be aware that, while institutions are obliged to make reasonable adjustments to allow students with disability to participate on a level playing field with other students, there is a limit to this obligation. For example, if an awardee requires course materials in an accessible format, institutions will provide alternative or accessible formats to enable participation. However, this does not necessarily mean that institutions have to provide materials in an awardee's preferred format.

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## Responsibilities for Reasonable Adjustments

- 9.5.3 Institutions have an obligation to provide awardees with reasonable adjustments to support their academic endeavours. DFAT provides non-academic reasonable adjustments. See below for clarification of the responsibilities of institutions and DFAT.

- 9.5.4 Institutions are required to consult with awardees with disability about their support and access needs to determine what reasonable adjustments are appropriate and necessary.

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- 9.5.5 Reasonable adjustments for academic support should be funded by institutions through their standard disability support mechanisms. Typical examples of academic reasonable adjustments include:

- i. access to and training in the use of assistive technology
- ii. access to lecture summaries, overheads or PowerPoint presentations

- iii. additional clarification of course materials by lecturers and tutors
- iv. advice about where to sit in particular lecture theatres and classrooms
- v. inclusive teaching strategies
- vi. communication through the awardee's preferred method of communication
- vii. additional academic assistance or extra time in the lead up to exams and other assessments
- viii. alternative exam and assessment formats
- ix. accessible parking
- x. disability advocacy and support
- xi. provision of tutors and note takers for disability support (tutoring or similar support for purely academic purposes can be funded through supplementary academic support as for all awardees).

9.5.6 DFAT provides non-academic reasonable adjustments and support for awardees with disability as required. Non-academic reasonable adjustments will be based on the needs identified by DFAT through an awardee's disability assessment and may include:



- xii. accessible interviews
- xiii. accessible pre-departure materials, procedures and programs, and support to attend pre-departure events where required
- xiv. assistance to select an institution and work with that institution to access academic reasonable adjustments
- xv. assistance to find and access suitable housing
- xvi. alternative transport arrangements to and from the home country and in study country
- xvii. support for full-time, part-time or non-ongoing carers
- xviii. funds for equipment that is essential to the successful completion of an awardee's scholarship
- xix. additional funds for medical cover (at the discretion of the SP)
- xx. limited access to additional medical support and care.

## 10. Scholarship fees and entitlements

### 10.1. Summary of scholarship fees and entitlements

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10.1.1. The costs covered by the scholarship are detailed in each awardee's scholarship contract. These include fees that are common for all awardees and costs that may be applicable depending on individual scholarship conditions.

10.1.2. All scholarship costs are entered into OASIS by the institution as part of the placement offer. Institutions are responsible for disbursing these funds to awardees, or expending the funds on the awardees behalf, as indicated in [Table 1](#).



10.1.3. These costs are subject to change, and any variations from the costs of an awardee's scholarship must be recorded by the institution in OASIS and be approved by the Sending Post as appropriate (see [Chapter 13](#)).

**Table 1: Summary of scholarship costs**

Scholarship cost	Method of payment	Description
Academic Fees	Paid by the Receiving Post directly to the institution	Covers the course costs and all compulsory academic fees that apply to international students, including Student Services Amenities Fees.
Mobilisation travel	Booked and paid for by Sending Post on behalf of the awardee	Payment of a single economy class airfare to the study country from the home country via the most direct and economical route at the commencement of the scholarship. See <a href="#">Section 10.7</a>
Visa expenses	Paid by Sending Post on behalf of the awardee	Payment of visa processing and medical checks necessary for obtaining a visa to travel to the study country.
Introductory Academic Program (IAP)	Paid by the Receiving Post directly to the institution	The Introductory Academic Program is provided by the institution for awardees when they arrive in the study country. The IAP is compulsory for all awardees at study commencement. See <a href="#">Section 12.1</a> .
Establishment Allowance	Paid by the Receiving Post to the institution to distribute to the awardee	A contribution towards initial expenses (F\$1942 in 2015) such as rental bonds, text books, study materials, additional medical insurance, home contents insurance etc. paid by the institution when the awardee arrives in the study country. See <a href="#">Section 10.2</a>
Contribution to Living Expenses (also	Paid by the Receiving Post to	A fortnightly Contribution to Living Expenses

referred to as a Stipend)	the institution to distribute to the awardee	(CLE) paid at either the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>unaccompanied or accompanied rate</li> <li>accompanied rate designed to contribute to support of two adults and 2 children only; additional family support to be provided by awardee</li> <li>both rates determined by DFAT.</li> </ul>
Medical cover	Paid by the Receiving Post to the institution to provide for the awardee	Some AAPS institutions offer medical cover to students and where this is available it is provided to cover the DFAT awardee's basic medical costs. Awardees may purchase, at their own expense, additional medical insurance to cover their families and ancillary services such as dentist, optometrist, physiotherapist, etc.  See <a href="#">Section 10.4</a>
Supplementary Academic Support	Paid by the Receiving Post to the institution to pay for on behalf of the awardee	These funds can be used by the institution to improve an awardee's performance to ensure their academic success. Awardees can also apply to institutions for these funds to contribute towards activities that enhance their academic progress and achievement.  See <a href="#">Section 12.2</a>
Completion travel	Paid by the RP to the institution to then book and pay for on behalf of the awardee	Payment of a single economy class airfare from the study country to the home country via the most direct and economical route at the completion of the scholarship.  See <a href="#">Section 10.9</a>

Scholarship costs subject to requirement and/or eligibility	Method of payment	Description
In-country preparatory	Paid by RP	Institutions assess whether awardees are required to undertake preparatory programs before



programs		commencing their main course of study.  See <a href="#">Section 5.2</a>
Preparatory programs in study country	Paid by the RP directly to the institution	Institutions assess whether awardees are required to undertake preparatory programs before commencing their main course of study.  See <a href="#">Section 5.2</a>
Reunion airfare	Paid by the RP to the institution to then book and pay for on behalf of the awardee	Unaccompanied awardees, whose scholarship period is two years or more, are eligible for the reunion airfare.  See <a href="#">Section 10.8</a>
Fieldwork	Paid by the RP to the institution	Awardees undertaking a PhD or Masters (by research or coursework with a compulsory fieldwork component) are eligible for one return airfare to the home country to be covered by their scholarship.  See <a href="#">Section 12.3</a>

## 10.2. Establishment allowance

10.2.1. Awardees are provided with a once-only establishment allowance on arrival in the study country. No re-establishment allowance is paid when an awardee transfers between institutions, or returns from a period of suspension. See [Section 10.3](#)

10.2.2. The allowance is a contribution toward expenses such as rental bonds, text books, study materials, laboratory coats, additional medical insurance and home contents insurance. It is paid in a lump sum for awardees to use at their discretion.

10.2.3. Awardees are required to travel prepared with funds (in the study country's currency where possible) to ensure they have enough money to cover any costs that may be incurred before they receive their establishment allowance.

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10.2.4. Awardees should note that it may take a number of days for the bank to process the institution's establishment allowance payment.

10.2.5. The institution must pay the full establishment allowance into a bank account nominated by the awardee on their arrival in the study country or by the next banking day. The institution will help awardees open a bank account on arrival. If there are delays opening a bank account, institutions should manage the payment as they deem appropriate.

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### 10.3. Transition allowance

- 10.3.1 As part of study program requirements some students will need to relocate to another campus in another country, eg those undertaking the LLB program may need to move from Vanuatu to Fiji to complete the Bar requirements, PDLP. A once-only transitional allowance (determined by DFAT) is paid to these students on arrival in Fiji to assist with set-up costs.
- 10.3.2 If students return to the home country and undertake the PDLP in the home country, the Transition allowance is not paid.

### 10.4. Contribution to living expenses (CLE)

- 10.4.1. A contribution to living expenses is paid to awardees to help them meet everyday living costs such as accommodation, transport, food, entertainment and stationery. DFAT reviews the payment rate regularly.
- 10.4.2. Entitlement to the contribution to living expenses commences the day the awardee departs the home country, which should be no more than 14 days before commencement of their Introductory Academic Program.
- 10.4.3. The contribution to living expenses is paid at two rates:
- i. Unaccompanied rate  
Paid to students who are in the study country without dependants
  - ii. Accompanied rate  
Paid to students whose dependants accompany them to the study country and remain in the study country with the awardee for 12 months or more. Approval for dependants to accompany the awardee in the study country will not be given for less than 12 months.
  - iii. If two AAPS awardees are married to each other, one will receive the unaccompanied rate while the other will receive the accompanied rate for the shorter duration of award. When one of the couple has completed their award the remaining awardee will receive the accompanied rate if the non-awardee spouse remains in the study country. If the non-awardee spouse has returned home then the unaccompanied rate will be paid to the awardee.
- 10.4.4. The contribution to living expenses ends in a maximum of ten days after the completion or termination of the scholarship depending on the availability of travel home. The completion of the scholarship varies:
- i. for awardees undertaking coursework studies, the contribution to living expenses will cease on agreement between DFAT and the institution.
  - ii. for research awardees, the contribution to living expenses will cease a maximum of ten days after the awardee submits their thesis or the day they arrive in the home country, whichever is earlier.
  - iii. for awardees departing before the release of their academic results, or for those who will be completing their thesis from their home country, the contribution to living expenses will cease on the day they arrive in

the home country or five days after their departure from the study country, whichever is earlier.

- iv. for awardees returning home before the release of their academic results, RST should obtain assurance from the awardee's supervisor that the awardee is likely to achieve a satisfactory result before agreeing to an earlier departure.

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10.4.5. Contribution to living expenses payments continue:

- i. during public holidays and semester breaks
- ii. during periods of fieldwork/industrial attachment under the scholarship
- iii. during reunion visits to the awardee's home country
- iv. for up to six weeks if an awardee is medically unfit to study, hospitalised or detained.

10.4.6. Contribution to living expenses payments will not be made:

- i. during periods of scholarship suspension
- ii. where an awardee is detained for more than six weeks.

10.4.7. Awardees are responsible for all their expenses in the study country including those of any family members. The contribution to living expenses is currently tax exempt.

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10.4.8. Awardees must notify institutions immediately if there is an overpayment of the contribution to living payments. In this case the awardee must make arrangements to repay the overpayment amount to the institution immediately. Failure to do so will be considered as an act of fraud.

10.4.9. The institution must:

- i. pay the contribution to living expenses fortnightly, in arrears, into a bank account in the study country nominated by the awardee
- ii. make the first payment on the first available pay day of the institution's payment period after the awardee's arrival
- iii. make subsequent payments fortnightly in accordance with the institution's fortnightly payment periods
- iv. advise all awardees of the need to obtain all requirements of the study country for banking purposes.

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## 10.5. Medical Cover

10.5.1. Some AAPS institutions (eg USP) provide basic medical cover for awardees only. In such cases DFAT will pay for this cost directly to institutions as part of the award entitlements, for the student only. The student is responsible for medical costs for her/his family if they are accompanying her/him while studying.

10.5.2. Where this is not offered by institutions DFAT will make payments to a provider for

medical services for students only.

- 10.5.3. Awardees are responsible for any costs that are not covered by the Medical cover or DFAT.
- 10.5.4. When an awardee is on suspension the institution, where applicable, will suspend the the Medical Cover for the suspension period, and reactivate the policy upon the awardee's return to studies.
- 10.5.5. Awardees must cover medical costs for all family members accompanying them in the study country.

10.5.6. The institution must:

- i. arrange for the enrolment and payment of the cost of Medical Cover for awardees, where applicable, for the duration of their stay in study country
- ii. ensure awardees receive a copy of their cover details regarding the Medical cover where applicable

10.5.7. If an awardee is accompanied the institution must ensure that the awardee understands that the Medical cover does not cover dependants.

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## 10.6. Visa costs

- 10.6.1. SPs will cover any visa processing costs including medical and or character clearance(s) undertaken in the awardee's home country to enable the student to enter and study in the study country. DFAT will not pay the costs of any additional medical examinations. This includes where an examination is required for re-entry into the study country following a scholarship suspension, or an extension of the scholarship requiring a new visa or passport renewal.

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## 10.7. Conditions that apply to travel



- 10.7.1. The following conditions apply to all travel (i.e. to the study country at the commencement of the scholarship, from the study country upon completion of the scholarship, fieldwork travel and reunion travel):
  - i. awardees are entitled to travel between the regional or international airport closest to their home city or town, and the airport closest to the institution where they will be studying
  - ii. awardees are to travel by the most direct route and are entitled to the "best fare of the day" which is the cheapest economy class fare available during the period of travel
  - iii. SPs, RPs and institutions must advise the awardee and the travel agent that once the ticket is purchased it cannot be varied without the approval of the SP, RP or institution
  - iv. SPs, RPs and institutions should arrange travel routes that minimise the risk of the awardee incurring visa problems in third countries while in transit or on stopover

- v. unless unavoidable, stopovers are not permitted. If unavoidable, awardees will cover transit costs that have been pre-approved by SP, though it should be checked first whether these costs are covered by the airline. As the CLE is calculated from the date of departure from the home country (for study commencement) or the date of arrival in the home country (for study completion), transit costs are deemed to be covered.
- vi. the awardee is responsible for all external arrival and departure taxes, except where it is part of an unavoidable stopover, in which case, the taxes should be incorporated into the price of the ticket at the time of purchase.

10.7.2. The scholarship does not cover costs for:

- i. travel insurance while the awardee is travelling to and from the study country or while studying in the study country (including for loss of possessions)
- ii. travel of awardees' dependants or family members
- iii. fees related to changing travel dates or missing flights
- iv. transporting personal effects or excess baggage to and from the study country, or within the study country.

## 10.8. Mobilisation travel

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 10.8.1. If awardees have not elected to be met by the institution on arrival, they must contact the institution or let the SP know to advise the RP of their arrival in the study country.  |  |
| 10.8.2. The airfare for awardees to travel to the study country is booked and paid for by the SP which records awardees' travel and arrival details in OASIS, which then notifies institutions/RPs of these details.  |  |
| 10.8.3. SPs are to arrange awardees' mobilisation travel and must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. ensure awardees arrive on or after the recommended date of arrival as specified in the institution's placement offer. This must be no more than 14 days before the awardee needs to commence the Introductory Academic Program or in-country preparatory program</li> <li>ii. record an awardee's travel details including the flight number and arrival time in OASIS as early as possible after finalising the travel booking</li> <li>iii. amend an awardee's travel details as soon as possible in OASIS if their arrival details change.</li> </ul> |   |
| 10.8.4. If timely and accurate advice is not received by the institution and additional costs are incurred, the institution may seek to pass these onto the SP.   |   |

## 10.9. Reunion airfare

- 10.9.1. The reunion airfare provides unaccompanied awardees with return travel to their home country for a reunion visit during institution semester breaks.

10.9.2. Eligibility for the reunion airfare entitlement will be confirmed in the letter of offer and contract, entered in OASIS by SPs, and agreed to by the awardee when they sign their scholarship contract.

10.9.3. To be eligible for the reunion airfare, awardees must:



- i. be unaccompanied in the study country
- ii. be enrolled for a minimum of two academic years in the study country (the academic year can include in-study-country preparatory programs).

10.9.4. If an awardee wants to return home at any other time, they may do so at their own expense and after approval through the institution from the SP, but it must not have an adverse effect on their academic progress. Awardees must keep the institution informed of their travel arrangements.

10.9.5. If an awardee decides to bring their family after they have arrived in the study country, they must inform RST who will process the change in OASIS.

10.9.6. Where an awardee decides after they arrive in the study country that they wish to have their family accompany them, they must forfeit their reunion airfare entitlement by signing the form at [Appendix A](#).

10.9.7. If an awardee is found to have accessed reunion airfare(s) while their immediate family is living with them in the study country, this will be investigated for fraud which may result in a termination of the awardee's scholarship and possible criminal charges.

10.9.8. The number of reunion airfare entitlements varies depending on the duration of the scholarship. The table below shows when the entitlement may be claimed.

**Table 2: reunion airfare entitlement table**

Length of Scholarship	Reunion Airfare entitlement at:			
	<i>End of year 1</i>	<i>End of year 2</i>	<i>End of year 3</i>	<i>End of year 4</i>
1 year	No			
1.5 years	Yes			
2 years	Yes	No		
2.5 years	Yes	Yes		
3 years	Yes	Yes	No	
3.5 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	
4 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

10.9.9. Once an awardee qualifies for the reunion airfare, they must contact the RST at their institution to arrange travel. If the awardee is not using the reunion airfare during the institution semester break, the awardee must provide the RST with written approval from the awardee's faculty or research supervisor for the period of travel, and

assurance that it will not interfere with the their study program.

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## Independent Travel

10.9.10. Awardees must advise the RST in advance of all overseas travel not covered under the reunion airfare entitlements.

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10.9.11. The institution must record the approved reunion airfare in OASIS.

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## Completion travel

10.10 The institution is responsible for providing an estimate of the return home travel costs at the time of making the placement offer. It is also responsible for arranging and paying for the awardee to travel home at the completion of their scholarship.

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10.10.1 The institution must arrange the awardee's return home travel so that they depart the study country before their visa expires or within 10 days of the scholarship end date, whichever comes first.

10.10.2 Awardees who fail to make travel arrangements to depart the study country within 10 days of their scholarship end date (if it comes before their visa end date) will forfeit their right to the completion travel entitlement, and will be reported to the Department of Immigration in the study country.

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# 11. General support services

## 11.1. Standards for support services

11.1.1. The institution is required to provide support services to awardees, which are not less than the requirements for International Students of that institution.

## 11.2. Arrival in the study country

11.2.1. Unless the awardee has indicated that they do not require airport reception, the institution will meet awardees on arrival at the arrival terminal of their final destination and take them to their initial accommodation. Costs incurred to meet awardees will be at the institution's expense.

11.2.2. SPs arrange the awardee's travel to the study country and must:

- i. record the awardee's travel details including flight number and arrival time in OASIS as early as possible after finalising the travel.
- ii. amend the awardee's travel details as soon as practical in OASIS if the arrival details change.

11.2.3. If SPs do not provide timely and accurate advice to the institution and additional costs are incurred, the institution may seek to pass these onto the SP.

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11.2.4. Awardees are required to notify the institution if their flight is delayed or where they miss a connecting flight so the institution can change the airport pick-up arrangements and advise temporary accommodation accordingly.

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### 11.3. Accommodation

11.3.1. Awardees are responsible for arranging their long-term accommodation and for the costs of all accommodation in the study country for themselves and their family. Institutions may arrange initial accommodation for awardees for a period of at least 14 days from when they arrive in the study country.

11.3.2. Awardees with disability may have special requirements in relation to accommodation and this will impose different responsibilities on RPs and institutions (see [Chapter 9](#)).

11.3.3. After the awardee has accepted their scholarship offer, SPs should immediately contact the institution regarding on-campus accommodation.

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#### Initial accommodation

11.3.4. Awardees must notify institutions if they do not require initial accommodation to be arranged for them. They must do this by email at least three weeks before arriving in the study country. If they fail to advise the institution, the awardee will be responsible for all associated costs of that accommodation.

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11.3.5. Awardees with accompanying family members must make their own arrangements for accommodation of family members and advise the institution. Institutions are not required to make accommodation arrangements for family members.

11.3.6. The institution must arrange initial accommodation for awardees, unless the awardee advises, and the SP has approval from PG if applicable, otherwise in writing.

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11.3.7. Institutions should provide awardees with details of local shops, food outlets, public transport and other services in the vicinity of the accommodation.



- 11.3.8. The institution may offer to help arrange initial accommodation for family members if an awardee is accompanied. These expenses are to be paid by the awardee.

## Long-term accommodation

- 11.3.9. The institution may advise awardees about:
- i. the range of off-campus accommodation options available, including accommodation suitable for people with disability or special needs
  - ii. information on tenancy requirements, tenancy protection, establishing utility connections, and rental prices including additional costs such as gas or electricity.

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## 12. Academic support

### 12.1. Introductory Academic Program

- 12.1.1. The Introductory Academic Program is intended to provide awardees with support during their first weeks in the study country, to assist in preparing for study in the study country, to enhance their ability to meet the demands of their studies and maximise the likelihood of completing their course by the scholarship completion date. The IAP can also assist the institution to monitor an awardee's capability and identify those who may need further assistance during the course of their studies.

- 12.1.2. Attendance at the Introductory Academic Program is compulsory for all awardees. **Failure to attend the Introductory Academic Program may result in the termination of the scholarship.**

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### 12.2. Supplementary academic support

- 12.2.1. A limited amount of supplementary academic support is available primarily where the institution determines that assistance is essential to avoid an awardee failing their studies. For high performing awardees, it may be used to assist with the costs of activities which would enhance the awardee's academic or professional achievement. For example, funds may be used for:
- i. tutoring/academic support
  - ii. editing theses
  - iii. attending in the study country conferences or workshops relevant to academic or professional development
- 12.2.2. Supplementary academic support is accrued at \$50 every six months (i.e. \$100 a year) for the period of the scholarship. The accrued funds may be expensed at any time during the scholarship. The funds, however, cannot be expensed in advance (e.g. if an activity happens during the first semester of a scholarship, the associated costs cannot exceed the actual accrued amount of \$50).

- 12.2.3. Awardees wanting to access the supplementary academic support funds must contact RST at their institution and gain approval for the use of these funds. On approval from SP the institution will advise the awardee whether the institution will pay for the approved use of the funds directly to the service provider, or if the awardee can be reimbursed upon the awardee's presentation of original receipts.

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- 12.2.4. An institution is responsible for administering the supplementary academic support, at its discretion, and may establish its own guidelines and procedures to ensure equity, transparency and good use of public money.
- 12.2.5. When determining the activity to be funded, the institution is expected to consider, but not be limited to, whether:
- the assistance to be funded with the supplementary academic support can be provided at no cost through the institution's academic support mechanisms
  - the awardee has sufficient remaining accrued funds for the activity after all previous costs against this entitlement have been expensed in OASIS
  - the awardee demonstrates commitment to completing the scholarship on time
  - the activity will enhance the awardee's academic performance or their professional career
  - the awardee has considered what else they might need supplementary academic support for and has factored this into their decision, noting that the funds will not be topped up.
- 12.2.6. Once the institution has approved expenditure of supplementary academic support funds for an awardee, the institution must either:
- pay the costs of the approved activity directly to the service provider, or
  - reimburse the awardee upon presentation of original receipt(s).
- 12.2.7. Supplementary academic support funding must not be used to purchase IT hardware (awardees may use the establishment allowance for this purpose), or to meet the expenses of adjustments made for awardees with disability (as this is the institution's responsibility).
- 12.2.8. The institution must monitor the provision of the entitlement and maintain records of expenditure for each awardee in OASIS. According to its contract with institutions, DFAT may audit these records at any time.


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## 12.3. Fieldwork

- 12.3.1. For the purpose of the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships, fieldwork is usually defined as firsthand observations and data collection needing to be made in the field as opposed to those observed or collected in the controlled university environment.
- 12.3.2. The fieldwork entitlement is a contribution to awardees' fieldwork costs.

- 12.3.3. To participate in and be funded for field work, awardees must be enrolled in a Masters by research, a PhD or a Masters by coursework which has a research component, where fieldwork is a compulsory component and included in the institution's offer.
- 12.3.4. Fieldwork must be undertaken in the study country or the awardee's home country. In exceptional cases, Program Areas may agree to an awardee undertaking fieldwork in another country within the region.
- 12.3.5. Fieldwork must be undertaken during the awardee's period of studies such that the total period of the scholarship does not exceed the length of the original program of study in the award offer.
- 12.3.6. Fieldwork which is to take place in more than one location in the study country or in the applicant's home country must be identified in the awardee's approved research proposal.
- 12.3.7. Only one period of fieldwork will be funded during the duration of a scholarship.
- 12.3.8. The maximum period which may be approved for fieldwork is 12 months.
- 12.3.9. Fieldwork must not result in an extension to the scholarship.
- 12.3.10. Financial entitlement for field work is one return airfare only. The CLE will continue to be paid in the study country.

- 12.3.11. The institution must record the fieldwork details in OASIS at the process placement stage. Failure to do so may result in funds for fieldwork not being approved. 
- 12.3.12. The institution (and awardees) should first investigate if some of the costs can be obtained from other sources (such as the institution's research funds).
- 12.3.13. The institution must seek approval from the SP (and it may also require approval from the partner government, where relevant) for fieldwork to be undertaken in a third country.
- 12.3.14. The institution is responsible for organising fieldwork travel for the awardee. One return economy class airfare is to be approved for the awardee to undertake fieldwork essential to their program.

- 12.3.15. SPs will need to give careful consideration to the implications of approving fieldwork. 

- 12.3.16. Awardees must communicate with and provide all relevant information on the fieldwork to the RST to assist the institution in organising fieldwork travel. Failing to notify the RST may result in the cancellation of an awardee's CLE entitlement. 
- 12.3.17. An awardee who is undertaking fieldwork outside of the study country and who has dependants with them in the study country must advise RST relating to the dependants staying in the study country.

## 12.4. Fieldtrips

12.4.1 Some programs of study require a component of the course or subject to be undertaken in the home country, eg Education course may require a teaching practicum.

- i. this is regarded as a fieldtrip and is undertaken in the home country
- ii. the entitlement for this is one return airfare and the CLE continues to be paid in the study country
- iii. the fieldtrip cannot take place in a final semester of award otherwise the CLE will be forfeited

12.4.2 Where a fieldtrip is a compulsory requirement of the awardee's study program, the institution must record the cost as part of the academic fees in OASIS at the process placement stage. Failure to do so may result in funds for the fieldtrip not being approved.

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## 12.5. Work Attachments

- 12.5.1. The maximum period of a work attachment is 12 months.
- 12.5.2. Work attachments must be undertaken either in the study country or the awardee's home country.
- 12.5.3. Work attachments must be undertaken during the awardee's period of studies such that the total period of the scholarship does not exceed the 12 months after the end of formal study, ie the study program.

12.5.4. The institution must include the requirement for a work attachment in the institution's original placement offer in OASIS.

12.5.5. The institution will continue to pay the contribution to living expenses allowance in the study country during the work attachment.

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12.5.6. The awardee is responsible for:

- i. all costs associated with the work attachment
- ii. ensuring that any work undertaken complies with the visa requirements of that country

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## 12.6. Work experience

12.6.1. Work experience to gain membership of any professional association will not be supported.

## 12.7. Academic progress

## Satisfactory academic progress

12.7.1. Satisfactory academic progress means that the awardee has passed all subjects for the given period, or has recorded satisfactory progress in a research program.

12.7.2. Institutions must:

- i. maintain an up-to-date record of each awardee's academic progress in OASIS, as required under the institution's contract with DFAT
- ii. monitor and record academic progress of awardees at the end of each semester (or session)
- iii. ensure that the awardee is on schedule to complete their course by the scholarship completion date, and is maintaining an appropriate study load.

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## Unsatisfactory academic progress

12.7.3. If an awardee fails a subject, or fails to make satisfactory progress in a research program, in any two successive semesters (or sessions), the institution must show cause as to why the awardee should not have their scholarship terminated (see [Section 13.9](#)).

12.7.4. An awardee's scholarship may be terminated if they fail to make satisfactory progress. If an awardee fails to make satisfactory academic progress, they must sign and comply with the institution's strategy and action plan to address the reasons for failure. If an awardee does not comply with the plan or continues to fail to make satisfactory academic progress the scholarship may be terminated.

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12.7.5. If an awardee fails a subject, or fails to make satisfactory progress in a research program, the institution must:

- i. record in OASIS at the end of each semester (or session) which subjects the awardee has failed or note that they have not made satisfactory progress in a research program
- ii. put in place a strategy and action plan in consultation with the awardee, to help them address the reasons for failure and remain on-schedule to complete their course by the completion date. The action plan could include for example:
  - supplementary academic support (e.g. additional tuition)
  - enrolling in non-standard sessions (e.g. summer school)
  - reducing the awardees workload in one semester and overloading in another (if the awardee is capable)
  - enrolment to repeat/replace failed subjects
  - course downgrade
- iii. ensure that the action plan is signed/acknowledged by both the awardee and the institution, and that the action plan is uploaded into OASIS.

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## Study load

- 12.7.6. On approval from SP, institutions may allow awardees to enrol in less than a full-time load (but must undertake a minimum of two courses/units) in any standard study period (i.e. semester) if:
- there are compassionate or compelling reasons for reducing the load
  - the awardee has studied, or plans to study, extra units in another study period and has provided a copy of their approved study plan to the RST.
  - the awardee has only a few units left to complete and these do not constitute a full-time load
  - prerequisite units are not available in that study period.
  - underpinning all the above, studies should be completed within the original award offer duration.

- 12.7.7. Awardees may seek approval from RST to spread their workload over more teaching periods (i.e. use non-standard sessions – summer, autumn, winter) where an institution offers non-compulsory study periods, or to reduce their workload if they are having trouble adjusting.

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## 13. Variations to the terms of enrolment

### 13.1. Scholarship conditions and terms of enrolment

- 13.1.1. Scholarships are awarded to recipients to obtain specified qualifications in order to contribute to development outcomes in their home country. The proposed course and the length of the scholarship are agreed by DFAT and in some instances, the partner government, following advice from institutions. The terms of the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship, and enrolment at the AAPS institution, are then agreed to by the recipient by signing the letter of offer and contract with the Commonwealth of Australia.
- 13.1.2. Variations to the awardee's terms of enrolment which affect the basis on which the scholarship was granted (e.g. change to field of study), will only be considered if it is the only option available to enable the awardee to successfully complete their program of study. All variations must be approved by DFAT.
- 13.1.3. The types of variations that will be considered by DFAT are detailed separately in this chapter.

- 13.1.4. Awardees are advised that variations to the terms of their enrolment will be considered in light of the scholarship's aim of contributing to the development of the awardee's home country, and that the awardee's tertiary education is intended to provide skills valuable to this aim. An awardee's personal aspirations are of secondary importance.

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- 13.1.5. All variations are managed and processed in OASIS by the SP and the institution. SPs will determine if partner government approval is required

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for a variation and should only approve variations in accordance with the relevant policy and in accordance with financial delegation.

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- 13.1.6. Institutions must seek approval from SPs as variations frequently involve the commitment of new funds. In some cases variations will require SPs to negotiate with other parties, such as partner governments.
  - 13.1.7. Institutions must lodge variation requests as early as practical in OASIS. Unless unavoidable, institutions must lodge variation requests at least six weeks before the scholarship completion date if the awardee is in the last semester of their scholarship.
  - 13.1.8. Institutions are to keep awardee's OASIS records up-to-date, particularly when seeking variations (e.g. details of dependants, passport details etc.).
  - 13.1.9. When deciding if a variation is necessary, the institution should assess the options available to produce the most effective outcome. Before submitting a variation in OASIS relating to academic failure, institutions must ensure they have investigated and reported the following to DFAT (using the OASIS journal notes facility):
    - i. the scope of the academic difficulty: what is the specific academic issue (e.g. statistics, essay writing, exams, attendance, research or time management)
    - ii. the reasons for the failure, for example family stress, academic stress or health issues
    - iii. what is being or will be done by both the awardee and institution to address the issues (e.g. if an awardee is suffering financial stress, what counselling and financial management plans have been put in place. If the issue is research skills, what extra academic support has the awardee attended and what are the outcomes of that support). This should take the form of an action plan to address the lack of academic progress
    - iv. how realistic is it that the awardee will successfully complete the current course
    - v. if there is an option to downgrade the academic award, and is this being considered.

## 13.2. Withdrawals

- 13.2.1. An awardee may withdraw from their study program and forfeit their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship before or after their arrival in the study country.

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- 13.2.2. An awardee that wishes to withdraw from their scholarship must provide this advice in writing to:
    - i. the SP if the awardee has not departed for the study country
    - ii. the institution if the awardee is in the study country.
  - 13.2.3. If an awardee withdraws from their scholarship after their arrival in the study country, they must return to their home country immediately. Awardees should contact the institution to arrange their return home travel. If the awardee does not

return home, they will incur a debt to the Commonwealth for the scholarship costs (see [Section 8.10](#)).

13.2.4. SPs are responsible for processing pre-departure withdrawals in OASIS.

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13.2.5. Institutions are responsible for notifying SP and RP and gaining their approval to process withdrawals for awardees in the study country who wish to withdraw from their scholarship.

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### 13.3. Extensions

13.3.1. An extension is defined as any increase to the length of a scholarship and is requested by the institution in OASIS and approved by the SP.

13.3.2. Only one extension of six months may be approved for the duration of the scholarship. A request for extension will generally not be considered for a study program that is only one academic year long.

13.3.3. Extensions will only be approved if there are legitimate reasons, including unforeseen and exceptional circumstances that are beyond the control of the awardee and the institution. Critical incidents and welfare issues are generally best addressed with a suspension.

13.3.4. The option to extend an Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship will generally only be considered where :

- i. the awardee is already in the second or subsequent year of their course
- ii. the awardee is expected to achieve the qualification as a consequence of the extension
- iii. the institution deems an extension to be the only acceptable strategy to achieve the qualification
- iv. the awardee has failed a subject and the institution has implemented a strategy to help them complete their study program on time and address the reasons for the failure.

13.3.5. If an extension to the scholarship is approved, the awardee will be responsible for paying any costs associated with gaining a new visa.

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13.3.6. SPs must maintain thorough records on extension requests, approvals and rejections in OASIS, including the rationale for the decision, which must be

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in line with the extension policy.

- 13.3.7. The institution should consider all possible options to avoid the need for an extension in situations where an awardee is not likely to finish their studies on time. These options include: I
- i. suspension of their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship
  - ii. supplementary academic support
  - iii. enrolling in non-standard sessions (e.g. summer school) to repeat failed subjects
  - iv. course downgrade
  - v. overloading in subsequent semesters only if the awardee is capable and the institution approves this
  - vi. completing studies from home, particularly for research courses. In such cases the awardee would not receive any further funding from DFAT
  - vii. terminating the scholarship if the awardee has failed a subject or failed to make satisfactory progress in a research program in any two subsequent semesters during the scholarship period.
- 13.3.8. Where an extension is recommended, the institution must ensure that appropriate support, monitoring and counselling strategies are in place that will enable the awardee to complete within the revised duration.
- 13.3.9. The institution must submit a study plan signed by the awardee and the institution together with the extension variation for the SP's consideration.
- 13.3.10. If the awardee is unlikely to achieve the desired outcome with the assistance provided, the institution should recommend termination of the scholarship to the SP.
- 13.3.11. The institution should fund all or part of the expense of extending an award where the institution has failed to:
- i. adequately monitor the awardee's progress
  - ii. take mitigating action where the reasons for requiring the extension occurred before the last two semesters of study
  - iii. provide appropriate academic supervision and support to the awardee to enable them to complete the scholarship on time
  - iv. has inadequately or incorrectly provided academic counselling to an awardee.
- 13.3.12. Institutions must maintain thorough records on extension requests, approvals and rejections in OASIS.

## 13.4. Suspensions

- 13.4.1. A scholarship may be suspended for a maximum of 12 months if deemed necessary (e.g. for health reasons, or family reasons).
- 13.4.2. Suspension variations are requested by the institution in OASIS and approved by the SP.

- 13.4.3. If an awardee has already been granted an extension of their scholarship, a suspension will not be granted if it will result in additional cost.
- 13.4.4. If a suspension is approved, no contribution to living expenses or other fees or entitlements will be paid for the period of suspension.
- 13.4.5. Awardees are allowed to use their reunion airfare entitlement in advance to fund their return home trip. In the absence of a reunion entitlement DFAT will fund the awardee's return trip airfare. The awardee is responsible for their dependants' airfares.
- 13.4.6. Where a suspension results in an awardee having to repeat subjects for which fees have already been incurred, the request will be handled as a suspension with an extension. No further requests for an extension will be permitted for the remainder of the scholarship.

13.4.7. If a suspension of the scholarship is approved, the awardee must:

- i. return to their home country (with their family if accompanied) for the period of the suspension
- ii. remain in contact with the SP in-Country during the period of the suspension
- iii. seek the prior approval of DFAT and the institution before returning to the study country at the end of the suspension period
- iv. contact the institution at least two months before they intend returning to the study country, to agree upon their scholarship recommencement date

13.4.8. If a suspension is granted on medical grounds, the awardee will be required to undergo a medical examination to see if they are fit to travel and to resume full-time study in the study country. This examination will be at the awardee's expense.

13.4.9. SP will decide after receipt of the medical report if the awardee can return to full time studies.

13.4.10. Awardees may be required to provide documentary evidence of their fitness to study to DFAT and the institution before approval will be given for their return to the study country and before a return flight will be booked on their behalf.

13.4.11. SPs are to assess suspension requests in line with this policy, and seek approval from partner governments where applicable.

13.4.12. If a suspension is granted on medical grounds, the SP may be required to assist the awardee in-Country during the period of suspension (see [Sections 15.5](#) and [17.5](#)).

13.4.13. The institution should assess a suspension request giving consideration to the remaining duration of the scholarship and the likely effects of the suspension (especially the break from study) on satisfactory completion of the course.

13.4.14. Requests for suspension are to be lodged by the institution as early as possible in OASIS and are to include the revised scholarship completion date and any additional costs, including the cost of return airfares for the suspension in the absence of the

reunion entitlement.

13.4.15. The institution should organise suspension travel to the awardee's closest home airport and expense DFAT for the cost. Suspension travel should be organised as soon as possible after the suspension has been approved by DFAT.

13.4.16. If the awardee:

- i. has their scholarship suspended due to illness or accident, they will need an assessment of their health and capacity to manage their studies before they return from suspension. Where the awardee has not returned home because they were unfit to travel, the institution must help organise this assessment
- ii. is deemed fit to return to their studies, the institution must assist the awardee with any visa requirements if necessary.

## 13.5. Transfers

13.5.1. A transfer between courses or to another campus is subject to SP approval, and where relevant, partner government approval. Transfers will only be considered where there is no alternative option available, and the transfer is in line with the priority areas as identified in the relevant country or region profile.

13.5.2. The course or campus transfer must not result in an extension of time to the scholarship.

13.5.3. Only one transfer request may be approved per awardee.

### Change to field of study

13.5.4. A change to the field of study is not permitted (e.g. a request for a transfer from an arts to a science degree). However, an institution may recommend that an awardee change to a different course within the same field of study at an institution that would be more appropriate to the awardee's and country priority needs.

### Course transfer

13.5.5. A course transfer is entered in OASIS by the institution where the awardee is enrolled and approved by the SP.

13.5.6. A course transfer is used to transfer an awardee from one course to another at the same institution (at the same or lower level).

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### Campus transfer

13.5.7. A campus transfer is used if the awardee is transferring (at the same or lower level) to a different campus within the same institution.

13.5.8. This may involve a transfer to another country (eg for USP)

13.5.9. Acceptable reasons for a transfer are:

- i. movement of an academic supervisor (research awardees)
- ii. the current campus ceases to offer the course
- iii. course downgrades

- iv. the awardee fails to meet the entry requirements of their university after they have completed pre-course English or other preliminary courses, but they meet the entry requirements of a similar course offered at another campus.

13.5.10. If a campus transfer is approved, the awardee must meet any costs associated with the transfer (e.g. costs of relocating).

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13.5.11. SPs may approve a transfer only if:

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- i. the new course is considered by the SP to be consistent with the country program priorities and partner government requirements (where applicable)
- ii. it will not result in an extension of time to the scholarship
- iii. the awardee is likely to successfully complete the scholarship.

13.5.12. If the course to which an awardee transfers is shorter than the original course, the receiving campus must reduce the duration of the scholarship in OASIS and advise the awardee of their scholarship in line with their reduced study period and corresponding reduced cost if applicable.

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## 13.6. Upgrades

- 13.6.1. Awardees are generally not permitted to upgrade to a higher level course (either within the same institution or at another institution) during or after completion of their scholarship. However, the following upgrades are permitted, subject to SP and partner government approval where relevant (please note that not all SPs allow for an upgrade):
- i. where an institution has recommended an awardee to be invited to undertake an Honours program
  - ii. Masters by research awardees may be permitted, **in exceptional circumstances**, to upgrade to a PhD program if they meet the strict requirements as outlined in [Sections 13.6.2 – 13.6.9](#).

### Upgrade to a PhD

- 13.6.2. DFAT would prefer for the placement into the PhD to be confirmed during the scholarship application phase. However, as this is not always possible, the following outlines the criteria and procedures SPs will apply when considering a request for a scholarship to be upgraded to a PhD.
- 13.6.3. This policy recognises that building the research capacity in a developing country will contribute to its economic development and poverty reduction. Allowing upgrades from a Masters by research to a PhD program should mean that the awardee's contribution to their home country's research capacity will be enhanced.

13.6.4. Final approval by SPs will be effected by the awardee signing a deed of amendment to their acceptance of offer contract with DFAT. The deed of amendment will be sent to the awardee via the institution to be signed and returned to DFAT for the delegate to sign. SPs will scan original and return to the awardee. One scanned copy each to be sent to the institution one retained for its file.

13.6.5. The awardee must submit their request for the upgrade to their institution including all supporting documentation, a minimum of 30 days before the awardee's scholarship completion date (DFAT will not support awardees remaining in the study country pending any decision on approvals for an upgrade).

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13.6.6. The awardee must submit the following with their request for an upgrade:

- i. clear written justification for the upgrade, including evidence that they are likely to return to a position in their home country or region which will enable them to pass on their research skills (e.g. evidence of previous relevant employment in an academic or research environment; a letter of potential employment in such an institution on return home)
- ii. evidence that they will be able to enhance research links between their home country and the study country
- iii. a brief proposal, including a project timeline, demonstrating how the PhD will be completed within the total of four years, including how the Masters studies to date have contributed to achieving that deadline.

13.6.7. Once the SP has given in-principle approval for an upgrade, the awardee must subsequently provide evidence that they have been accepted into the proposed PhD program before final approval by the SP can be given.

13.6.8. If approval for the upgrade is given, the awardee make the necessary visa arrangements if necessary

13.6.9. SPs and the partner government where applicable, may consider upgrades of exceptional awardees from a Masters by research to a PhD on a case-by-case basis under the following criteria:

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- i. the PhD will be undertaken at the same institution at which the awardee is studying a Masters by research program under the scholarship
- ii. the upgrade will result in the study period (and hence the scholarship duration) not exceeding four years in total (i.e. the equivalent duration had the institution's initial offer been for the PhD).

13.6.10. SPs must advise the RP if an upgrade is approved, and upload the deed of amendment, signed by the awardee, in OASIS.

13.6.11. The institution must:

- i. submit the request for an upgrade, including all supporting documentation listed at [Section 13.6.6](#), to SPs at least 30 days before the awardee's scholarship completion date

- ii. ensure the supervisor and the institution's chair of the Research Committee or equivalent supports the upgrade
- iii. provide copies of all half-yearly reports submitted by the supervisor to the research committee or equivalent.

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- 13.6.12. In the event that an upgrade is approved, if necessary the RP will provide a "No Objection Letter" for the awardee to apply for a further visa to remain in the study country beyond the initial visa end date.

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## 13.7. Reductions

- 13.7.1. A variation to reduce the length of a scholarship may be required for a number of reasons:
- i. an awardee completing their study ahead of time
  - ii. conditions of the scholarship not being met
  - iii. in the case of articulated courses, the first course is completed but not to a sufficient level to undertake the second course.

- 13.7.2. The institution must advise the SP and RP of a revised scholarship end date via OASIS and advise the awardee that DFAT will remove support for their visa 30 days after their revised scholarship end date.

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## 13.8. Entitlement variations

- 13.8.1. An entitlement variation is used to:
- i. add courses (pre-course English or articulating courses)
  - ii. add entitlements (fieldwork, reunion airfare etc.)
  - iii. remove entitlements (reunion airfare etc.)
  - iv. edit dates for courses or the scholarship, which in turn impacts on the value of entitlements
  - v. increase or decrease the value of entitlements.

- 13.8.2. If an entitlement variation is required before the awardee departs for the study country, the SP is responsible for entering the entitlement variation.

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- 13.8.3. A deferral variation must be raised before the awardee arrives in the study country.

- 13.8.4. All variations in OASIS must be processed as soon as possible.

- 13.8.5. Institutions entering entitlement variations should provide details about why the variation is required to assist the SP in its decision-making.

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- 13.8.6. Institutions must raise variations in OASIS as soon as possible to allow Posts sufficient time to process and seek approval.

## 13.9. Terminations

- 13.9.1. DFAT (SP) will terminate a scholarship where an awardee:
- does not make successful academic progress and remedial strategies have not been successful
  - has infringed or failed to meet the conditions of the scholarship
  - is excluded by the institution from the course or study units due to academic failure or from remaining at the institution because of misconduct (as defined by the institution)
  - has completed the maximum period of English language training available under the scholarship and still has insufficient English language ability for entry to the academic program
  - is unable to continue a program due to serious illness or incapacity for medical/mental health reasons, and the awardee does not voluntarily withdraw
  - conducts themselves in a manner which is considered to have transgressed acceptable community standards in the study country
  - applies for a different visa (other than the student visa)
  - is found to have committed an act of fraud
  - is found guilty of a crime.
- 13.9.2. DFAT reserves the right to terminate a scholarship without a supporting recommendation from the institution where, in DFAT's view, the continued funding of the awardee would be an inappropriate use of Australian Government funds.

- 13.9.3. The awardee will receive a letter of intent to terminate from DFAT (SP) advising:
- of the recommendation for their scholarship to be terminated
  - that the awardee has 14 days from the date of the letter to provide a statement detailing the reasons why the scholarship should not be terminated (the letter of appeal should be sent directly to the Head of the DFAT Aid Section in the SP)
  - that if DFAT proceeds with the termination, the awardee will no longer be eligible to hold a student visa for the study country.
- 13.9.4. If an awardee does not appeal the termination, their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship will be terminated upon approval by the Head of the DFAT Aid Section in the SP.
- 13.9.5. If the awardee appeals, DFAT (SP) may:
- reject the appeal, in which case DFAT's decision is final
  - accept the appeal, in which case the awardee may continue with their course of study, but must liaise with RST at their institution in relation to meeting any conditions advised by DFAT.
- 13.9.6. Where DFAT (SP) decides to terminate the awardee's scholarship, the awardee:
- will receive a formal letter of termination to advise that the scholarship has been terminated



- ii. must comply with any directives from the Department of Immigration in the study country in relation to their visa.

13.9.7. The institution must:

- i. immediately advise the SP and RP via OASIS if it becomes aware of any circumstances that may be grounds for termination, including those detailed in [Section 13.9.1](#).

13.9.8. If DFAT decides not to terminate the awardee's scholarship, the institution must:

- i. liaise with DFAT about any conditions to be imposed on the continuation of the awardee's scholarship
- ii. liaise with the awardee about complying with any conditions on continuation of their scholarship.

13.9.9. If DFAT terminates the scholarship, the institution must assist the awardee with return home travel arrangements and arrange for the awardee's Contribution to Living Expenses to cease 5 days after the termination date stated in the final termination letter (refer [Section 13.9.6](#)).

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## 14. Welfare Incidents


### 14.1. What is a Welfare Incident?

- 14.1.1. A welfare incident is any event or situation (not listed in [Section 15.1.3](#)) that adversely affects, or has the potential to adversely affect, an awardee's ability to successfully complete their scholarship.
- 14.1.2. A range of situations may qualify as welfare incidents including:
  - i. any incident where a complaint is lodged or an awardee is otherwise accused, of harassment, sexual harassment or bullying
  - ii. any incident where an awardee lodges a complaint or otherwise alleges they have been the victim of harassment, sexual harassment or bullying
  - iii. any time that an awardee is diagnosed with a serious or chronic illness (including mental illness), or admitted to hospital in a non-emergency situation
  - iv. any time that an awardee notifies that they are pregnant
  - v. any time an awardee is referred for counselling
  - vi. any time an awardee is the victim of crime overseas
  - vii. any time that an awardee is un-contactable and has been absent from all classes for one full week without explanation
  - viii. any time an awardee's accompanying family member in the study country is involved in (what would otherwise be) a critical incident
  - ix. any time that an awardee notifies that a member of their family has died overseas



- x. a natural disaster that occurs outside the study country and may affect an awardee (i.e. in the home-country of awardees). Approaches for responding in these situations are outlined [Chapter 16](#).
- 14.1.3. If a member of the awardee's family is involved in a critical or welfare incident, the awardee is responsible for all associated costs and arrangements regarding the family member(s) involved in the incident.

## 14.2. DFAT Notification and Procedure for Welfare Incidents

- 14.2.1. Institutions must notify the SP as soon as possible within business hours when they become aware of any welfare incident that has the potential to affect the awardees' ability to successfully complete their scholarship. Institutions are required to provide only sufficient information to enable the SP to be satisfied that appropriate action and supports have been put in place to ensure the welfare of the awardee.
- 14.2.2. There is no exception to this requirement.
- 14.2.3. Notification must follow this process outlined in this section.
- 14.2.4. The institution must first update the OASIS journal with a record of the welfare incident. 
- 14.2.5. Journal notes must be clear, factual and compliant with all relevant Commonwealth legislation and regulations. Institutions should consider the privacy of the awardee and their family and ensure that personal information, and in particular sensitive information as defined in section 6 of the Privacy Act 1988, is only included in journal notes to the extent it is reasonably necessary to adequately describe the welfare incident and action taken.
- 14.2.6. Once the OASIS journal is updated, the institution should also send an e-mail to the RP bringing the incident to their attention.
- 14.2.7. E-mail notifications must have the following subject line: WELFARE INCIDENT – awardee's surname – awardee's OASIS number. (E.g.: WELFARE INCIDENT – JONES – ST0001234).
- 14.2.8. Institutions are expected to notify the SP but should include in their e-mail notifications to the RP, managing contractors or Case Managers (if applicable).
- 14.2.9. Where an institution's first notification of a welfare incident comes from a Case Manager, the institution must inform DFAT that they were advised of the incident by the Case Manager.

## 14.3. Principles for managing welfare incidents

- 14.3.1. DFAT's management of welfare incidents is based on an early-warning approach that allows us to ensure appropriate support for awardees facing health, welfare or academic issues.
- 14.3.2. This approach puts supporting awardees first, but also acknowledges that DFAT ultimately bears the financial and reputational risk associated with an awardee failing to complete their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship. The key to this approach is prompt notification of the key aspects of a welfare incident.

- 14.3.3. Awardees will not be penalised for reporting, and must understand that the capacity of DFAT and institutions to support them in difficult times is limited by their own prompt disclosure of welfare incidents.
- 14.3.4. When deciding whether to report an incident and what information to provide, DFAT asks institutions and managing contractors to consider whether a reasonable person would anticipate that a particular incident has the potential to affect an awardee's capacity to successfully complete their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship. If the answer is yes, then the incident should be reported.

## Privacy

- 14.3.5. DFAT respects awardee's privacy. However, in order to ensure they are properly supported in times of crisis, DFAT also requires the disclosure of welfare incidents.
- 14.3.6. Awardees agree, when they sign their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship contract, that institutions and managing contractors can share personal information about them and their dependents with DFAT, including sensitive information as defined in the Privacy Act 1988. This enables institutions and managing contractors to notify DFAT of welfare incidents to the extent that the welfare incident has the potential to affect the awardee's ability to successfully complete their scholarship.
- 14.3.7. DFAT does not require full disclosure of all personal and sensitive details of a welfare incident. DFAT needs only enough information that is reasonably necessary to understand and assess any risk to the awardee and to be confident that they are being appropriately supported. The purpose of the disclosure of information is to enable DFAT and others to properly manage welfare incidents affecting awardees and their scholarship conditions. DFAT will not use or disclose the information for any other purpose.

## 14.4. Welfare Incident – General Responsibilities

- 14.4.1. DFAT's primary concern is the welfare of awardees. DFAT expects all parties to respond to welfare incidents effectively, professionally, and in strict adherence to the policies and procedures outlined in this chapter.
- 14.4.2. Once reported, welfare incidents are managed on a case-by-case basis. However, there are some general procedures, outlined in this section, which must be followed for all welfare incidents.
- 14.4.3. DFAT respects the privacy of all awardees. However, in order to ensure that DFAT and institutions can provide relevant support and assistance, DFAT recommends awardees bring all welfare incidents to the attention of the RST if the welfare incident has the potential to affect the awardee's ability to successfully complete their scholarship.
- 14.4.4. Awardees should be aware that they will not be penalised for reporting welfare incidents. Any information that may then be passed onto DFAT will only need to be information that is reasonably necessary for DFAT to understand and assess any risk to the awardee and to be confident that they are being appropriately supported. DFAT will not use or disclose the information for any other purpose.

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14.4.5. Institutions are responsible for notifying DFAT of welfare incidents. In particular:

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- i. RST must ensure that the SP is notified of all welfare incidents as per processes and timelines outlined in [Section 14.2](#).
- ii. DFAT considers the RST to be the primary contact for all welfare incidents.
- iii. DFAT expects institutions to have appropriate protocols in place to ensure that RST are notified immediately should another area of the institutions become aware of an issue before the RST. In such cases, institutions must ensure that personal privacy concerns do not prevent RST, and through them DFAT, being made aware of the general details of welfare incidents.
- iv. It is the responsibility of each institution to ensure that an officer will be available to respond to any welfare incidents which occur when the RST Officers are away from the office.

14.4.6. Management and Response:

- i. Work with the awardee to establish a response or strategy to help them address the welfare incident and/or minimise the ongoing effect of the incident on their studies.
- ii. Continue to monitor the welfare incident, keep up-to-date records including OASIS journal notes, and report regularly to DFAT.
- iii. If necessary, intervene early with the awardee to discuss options, such as altered study plans tutoring or short-term suspensions, to successfully manage their study load during a difficult time.
- iv. In addition to these general procedures please see [Sections 14.4 through 14.11](#) which outline the responsibilities of all parties in response to different types of welfare incidents.

14.4.7. If a welfare incident becomes or leads to a critical incident, institutions must escalate the incident immediately by following the notification and procedural requirements in [Chapter 15](#). If an incident is escalated, DFAT may request the institution to provide additional information about the original welfare issues and how the institution responded.

14.4.8. Where a Program Area is made aware of a welfare incident, by any party other than the RST Officer, they must inform the RST Officer and the SP as soon as possible within business hours.

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14.4.9. Once notified of a welfare incident the Program Area may be requested to work with the institution to develop a strategy to ensure the incident is managed appropriately.

14.4.10. Managing contractors (either in the home country or overseas) have an obligation to ensure that the scholarship programs they administer are managed effectively and efficiently. This includes responding appropriately to welfare incidents in accordance with the process outlined in this chapter.

14.4.11. Where a managing contractor is made aware of a welfare incident, DFAT has an

expectation that:

- i. Managing contractor must inform the relevant RST Officer and the SP as soon as possible in business hours.
- ii. Case Managers may also notify their immediate supervisor, in addition to notifying the relevant RST Officer.
- iii. After the relevant RST Officer is notified the Managing Contractor or Case Manager should work with the RST Officer to develop a strategy to help the awardee manage and respond to the welfare incident.

## 14.5. Conflict, Harassment and Bullying

- 14.5.1. During their time in the study country awardees may experience interpersonal conflict with friends, family, colleagues or staff at their institution. DFAT considers all serious incidents of conflict to be welfare incidents.
- 14.5.2. Similarly, all incidents of harassment and bullying, that involve an awardee in any capacity, are also considered welfare incidents. This includes the lodging of complaints of harassment or bullying by or against any awardee.
- 14.5.3. In the scholarships context, harassment and bullying may be described as repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards an awardee, or a group of awardees, that creates a risk to physical or mental health, safety and well-being. It includes behaviour (generally a pattern of behaviour) that intimidates, offends, degrades or humiliates another awardee. Harassment and bullying could be sexual in nature, could be based on gender, race, religion or disability or could be unconnected to any particular characteristic of an individual.
- 14.5.4. Further information about bullying and harassment, including information on strategies to deal with bullying and harassment, is available on the Australian Human Rights Commission's website at:  
<http://www.hreoc.gov.au/bullying/index.html>.
- 14.5.5. Management of bullying and harassment that involves awardees (in any capacity) will be based on the severity of the incident.
- 14.5.6. In the event that an awardee is involved (in any capacity) in a serious interpersonal conflict, harassment, bullying or complaints, DFAT has the following expectations.
- 14.5.7. Awardees are expected to act respectfully, treat others with dignity and avoid behaviours that could be considered threatening or harassing. DFAT has an expectation that, as responsible adults, awardees have the capacity to mediate any minor interpersonal conflict they might experience, e.g. minor disputes within shared accommodation.
- 14.5.8. However, awardees are not expected to remain silent if they are being made to feel uncomfortable or unsafe, and should report to their RST Officer as soon as possible if:
  - i. they are being made to feel threatened or unsafe
  - ii. they are experiencing prolonged or repeated harassment or bullying, or

- iii. they feel they are being treated unfairly and their own efforts to resolve the matter have been unsuccessful.

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14.5.9. Institutions must:

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- i. ensure the safety and wellbeing of all awardees and, when possible, any accompanying family members
- ii. facilitate the provision of support to the awardee and, when possible, any accompanying family members. Support may include access to counselling services
- iii. manage the incident as per the institution's standard conflict resolution and bullying and harassment policies.

## 14.6. Health Issues and Scheduled Hospitalisations

- 14.6.1. Awardees may experience physical or mental health problems whilst they are on scholarship. Physical and mental health issues can significantly affect an awardee's ability to concentrate, focus, organise themselves and keep on track with their studies.
- 14.6.2. Minor health problems are best dealt with by the awardee.
- 14.6.3. More serious or chronic health problems (including scheduled tests or treatments in a hospital) will constitute welfare incidents and will impose responsibilities on an institution.
- 14.6.4. Institutions are expected to report all serious or chronic health problems as early as possible. Where details are not confirmed (for example if an awardee is waiting for test results) notification should not be delayed. RST Officers can include in their notification an outline of what information is not yet available. The earlier DFAT is notified the more likely it is that the awardee will be appropriately supported.
- 14.6.5. If an awardee experiences a change in their health, DFAT has the following expectations.

- 14.6.6. Awardees are expected to monitor their own health and to manage any minor health problems themselves.
- 14.6.7. However, awardees should report to their RST Officer as soon as possible if:
  - i. they have questions about their medical cover
  - ii. they are unsure where or how to access medical services
  - iii. they are required to have medical tests which require admission to hospital, including day procedures
  - iv. they are diagnosed with a serious condition or a chronic illness

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- v. they become pregnant and it may affect their study program, or
- vi. they are made aware that they will have to attend hospital for treatment in the near future.

14.6.8. Awardees who suspend their scholarship and return home on medical grounds must stay in contact with DFAT and must seek prior approval from DFAT and their institution before returning to the study country.

14.6.9. Institutions must:

- i. ensure that all awardees are made aware of the nearest medical and counselling facilities, either on or close to campus, and how to access those facilities
- ii. ensure awardees are made aware of other health and wellbeing facilities and services, such as the institution's on-campus health and fitness centre or local remedial therapy practices.
- iii. notify DFAT, as per the procedures outlined in [Section 14.2](#), as soon as they are informed that an awardee is experiencing a serious or chronic health issue or requires hospitalisation.

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## Long term illness

- 14.6.10. If an awardee experiences serious or chronic health problems and is unable to study or is hospitalised, DFAT will continue to provide Contribution to living expenses payments for six weeks.
- 14.6.11. Beyond this six week period awardees who are unable to study due to serious or chronic health problems should suspend their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship until they have recovered. (See [Section 13.4](#)).

## Medical costs

- 14.6.12. Awardees' medical cover to meet their basic medical costs differs amongst institutions and this should be explained at the commencement of award
- 14.6.13. Medical cover may not cover all medical expenses incurred by awardees or their dependants during their Scholarship period.
- 14.6.14. Awardees are liable for any additional medical costs not covered by the medical cover.
- 14.6.15. If an awardee or their dependants are unable to meet their medical expenses in the study country, DFAT may consider suspending their scholarship and requiring them to return home to recover. In assessing whether an awardee should be suspended DFAT will consider whether, on balance, the cost of their medical expenses is greater than the cost of returning home.

## 14.7. Death of an awardee's family member

- 14.7.1. DFAT will provide some financial assistance to awardees in the event that an immediate family member dies in the study country. It is up to SP's discretion on what financial assistance to provide.
- 14.7.2. In the event that the immediate family member dies in the home country the awardee, on approval of SP, is entitled to one return airfare to the home country.
- 14.7.3. DFAT understands that the death of a family member can be a traumatic event that may affect an awardee's capacity to successfully complete their studies.
- 14.7.4. In the event that an awardee's family member dies the following additional responsibilities apply.

- 14.7.5. Institutions must advise SP and RP immediately so that discussions can be held. I
- 14.7.6. Depending on the discretionary approval of SP on financial assistance, arrangements for repatriation of the body will be made by institutions and costs covered by SP as a reimbursable.
- 14.7.7. Institutions must facilitate the provision of support to the awardee and, when possible, any accompanying family members. Support may include access to counselling services.
- 14.7.8. Awardees are entitled to one return airfare per award for travel to the home country for compassionate travel. SP must approve the travel and be notified in advance of an awardee's departure date.
- 14.7.9. The use of the Compassionate Travel entitlement should be noted in the OASIS journal.

## 14.8. Pregnancy

- 14.8.1. In order to maximise awardees' chances of successfully completing their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships, DFAT strongly recommends that pregnant awardees consider deferring or suspending their award and resuming their studies in the study country after the birth of their child (see [Sections 6.2](#) and [13.4](#)).
- 14.8.2. Deferring or suspending allows awardees time to recover, to put in place any necessary adjustments or care arrangements, and to organise dependent visas if required.
- 14.8.3. If a pregnant awardee does not defer or suspend, DFAT will not provide any financial assistance beyond the standard scholarship entitlements, or after the scholarship end date. This includes:
  - i. on-scholarship awardees
  - ii. completing awardees
  - iii. awardees waiting to give birth and awardees waiting for their child to obtain a visa.

14.8.4. On-scholarship awardees are encouraged to:

- i. notify their RST Officers of their pregnancy
- ii. consider suspending their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship and resuming their studies after the birth of their child.
- iii. keep their RST Officers apprised of their condition.

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14.8.5. Institutions must:

- i. ensure that all awardees are made aware of the nearest medical and counselling facilities, either on or close to campus, and how to access those facilities.

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14.8.6. Institutions may approve an awardee's use of a Reunion Airfare entitlement in advance (if the awardee is entitled to the Reunion airfare) if the awardee wishes to suspend and return home in order to give birth. SP must be notified in advance of an awardee's departure date.

14.8.7. The use of the Reunion Airfare entitlement for this purpose should be noted in the OASIS journal. A medical certificate must be cited before an institution approves the use of Reunion Airfare entitlement in this way.

## 14.9. Referral to Counselling Services

- 14.9.1. Undertaking a scholarship in another country can present new challenges and can be stressful for awardees, especially in the initial months. Awardees are often referred to counselling services in order to help them adjust to life in the study country and to the demands of its institutions.
- 14.9.2. All referrals to counselling services should be considered welfare incidents and should be dealt with in accordance with the general notification and procedural requirements outlined in [Sections 14.2](#) and [14.3](#).

## 14.10. Victim of Crime Overseas

14.10.1. Where an awardee is the victim of crime whilst on-scholarship but overseas (e.g. on holiday, or doing fieldwork) there is often very little that DFAT can do to rectify the situation. However, DFAT does consider these incidents to be welfare incidents.

14.10.2. In addition to reporting the offence to relevant local authorities, DFAT advises all awardees to inform the SP.

14.10.3. Awardees are responsible for organising their own travel insurance.

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14.10.4. If the awardee returns to the study country, institutions must meet with the awardee to determine if they require access to counselling services.

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14.10.5. SPs must notify the RP and the relevant institution as per the standard procedure outlined in [Section 14.2](#).

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14.10.6. If appropriate, the SP may facilitate the provision of support to the awardee in order to enable them to return to their studies in the study country.

14.10.7. Awardees will not be entitled to financial compensation from DFAT if they are victims of crime overseas. Any support provided by the SP will be entirely at their discretion.

## 14.11. Absent awardee

14.11.1. If an awardee has been reported to the RST Officer as not attending classes for one week and all attempts by the institution to contact the awardee have failed, this is a welfare issue.

14.11.2. The RP must:

- i. work with the institution to locate the awardee and establish their wellbeing
- ii. work with the institution and SP to recommend a suitable course of action based on the awardee's whereabouts and wellbeing
- iii. notify the necessary authorities (including the Department of Immigration) if the awardee cannot be located.

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## 15. Critical incidents

### 15.1. What is a critical incident?

15.1.1. A 'critical incident' is a clearly defined event or situation that may happen to an awardee while they are on-scholarship that adversely affects, or has the potential to adversely affect, an awardee's ability to successfully complete their scholarship.

15.1.2. DFAT's primary concern with any critical incident is the welfare of awardees. DFAT expects all parties to respond to critical incidents effectively, professionally, and in strict adherence to the policies and procedures outlined in this chapter.

15.1.3. The following events or situations are always critical incidents:

- i. any suspected breach of the study country's laws by an awardee, which results in the awardee being questioned, detained or charged with any criminal offence
- ii. any time that an awardee is the victim of a crime in the study country

- iii. any incidence of domestic violence involving an awardee, either as a victim or a perpetrator
  - iv. any time that an awardee is admitted to hospital unexpectedly or in an emergency
  - v. the death of an awardee while they are on-scholarship, in the study country or overseas.
- 15.1.4. This chapter outlines the notification procedures for critical incidents, the roles and responsibilities of all parties and the response and management processes for all critical incidents.
- 15.1.5. This chapter delineates some responsibilities between Program Areas, managing contractors and Case Managers because of the sensitive nature of critical incidents. However, Program Areas have overarching responsibility for ensuring compliance with their requirements in this chapter.
- 15.1.6. A welfare incident is any other event or situation (not listed in [Section 15.1.3](#)) that adversely affects, or has the potential to adversely effect, an awardee while they are on-scholarship. Welfare incidents are covered in [Chapter 14](#).
- 15.1.7. Natural disasters are outlined [Chapter 16](#) of this document.

## 15.2. Role of Regional Scholarships Team (RST) Officers

- 15.2.1. It is expected that notifications of critical incidents will generally made by Institutions' RST Officers. I
- i. Institutions should have appropriate protocols in place to ensure that RST Officers are notified immediately should another area of the institution become aware of an issue before the RST Officer.
- 15.2.2. It is the responsibility of each institution to ensure that an officer will be available to respond to any critical incidents which occur when the RST Officers are away from the office.
- 15.2.3. RST Officers must ensure that the RP is notified of every critical incident immediately as per the processes in [Section 15.3](#).
- 15.2.4. DFAT considers the RST Officer to be the primary contact for all critical incidents and expects institutions to have appropriate protocols in place to ensure that RST Officers are notified immediately should another area of the institutions become aware of an issue before the RST Officer. In such cases, institutions must ensure that personal privacy concerns do not prevent RST Officer, and through them DFAT, being made aware of critical incidents.

## 15.3. Notification of critical incidents

- 15.3.1. The RP must be notified immediately when institutions become aware of a critical incident that adversely affects, or has the potential to adversely affect, an awardee's ability to successfully complete their scholarship including out of hours, on weekends and on public holidays.
- i. There is no exception to this requirement.
- 15.3.2. During business hours, notification should be by a phone call to the RP followed by an

e-mail that clarifies all the relevant information.

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- 15.3.3. All email notifications must have the following subject line: CRITICAL INCIDENT – awardee’s surname – awardee’s OASIS Number. (E.g.: CRITICAL INCIDENT – JONES – ST0001234).
- 15.3.4. Out of office hours notification must be by email which provides all the relevant information.
- 15.3.5. The RST Officer(s) should contact the RP where an immediate response from DFAT is necessary.
- 15.3.6. Out of office hours email notifications should also include an out of hours contact phone number for the RST Officer or relevant contact person at an institution.
- 15.3.7. Notification should include only sufficient detail about the awardee and the incident to enable DFAT to assess and manage the awardee and to ensure appropriate support is in place. Information gaps should be also noted. See [Section 15.5.2](#) and [15.5.3](#) for more information on the expected content of notifications.
- 15.3.8. Institutions are to notify the RP and SP only and may not notify Managing Contractors or Case Managers. It is the responsibility of the SP to notify all other parties.
- 15.3.9. Where an institution’s first notification of a critical incident comes from a Case Manager, the institution must inform DFAT that they were advised of the incident by the Case Manager.
- 15.3.10. In such cases, the institution may copy in the Case Manager when they provide e-mail notification to the Posts. If copied in the Case Manager must not forward this e-mail on to any other party.

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- 15.3.11. Managing Contractors and Case Managers in the study country have an obligation to ensure that the Scholarship Programs they administer are managed effectively and efficiently. This includes responding appropriately to critical incidents and strictly complying with the processes outlined in this Chapter.
- 15.3.12. RP and SP should have appropriate protocols in place to ensure that RST Officers are notified immediately should they become aware of an issue before the RST Officer. In such cases, Posts must ensure that personal privacy concerns do not prevent RST Officer being notified of a critical incident that has the potential to affect the ability of the awardee to successfully complete their scholarship.
- 15.3.13. Where a Managing Contractor or Case Manager becomes aware of a critical incident they must immediately inform the relevant RST Officer.
- 15.3.14. After the relevant RST Officer is notified the Managing Contractor or Case Manager must not take any further action until instructed by DFAT.
- 15.3.15. Where a managing contractor or Case Manager cannot contact the RST Officer, they should contact the RP immediately as per the processes in [Sections 15.3.1 – 15.3.7](#).
- 15.3.16. Case Managers may notify their immediate supervisor, in addition to notifying the relevant RST Officer.
- 15.3.17. Posts are responsible for ensuring that Managing Contractors and sub-contractors, including Case Managers are aware of their responsibilities under this handbook.

- 15.3.18. An awardee must immediately contact their RST Officer if they are involved in a critical incident, or if they become aware of a critical incident involving another awardee so that the RST Officer can assess if the critical incident that has the potential to affect the ability of other awardee to successfully complete their scholarship. A
- 15.3.19. Accompanied awardees must ensure their family members understand that they should contact the awardee's RST Officer immediately if the awardee is involved in a critical incident and unable to make contact themselves.

- 15.3.20. If contacted, the RP will provide instructions to the Managing Contractor or Case Manager on responding to the critical incident. R
- 15.3.21. The right to notify the Program Area is reserved for DFAT.
- 15.3.22. The RP will manage, at their discretion, all notification of and communication
- i. within DFAT
  - ii. with any relevant Managing Contractors and Case Managers
  - iii. with relevant Whole-of-Government parties, including as appropriate the Department of Immigration in the study country and
  - iv. with relevant diplomatic missions, including Consulates and High Commissions.

## 15.4. Principles for managing critical incidents

- 15.4.1. The RP will act as the primary liaison between all relevant parties in the course of managing and responding to a critical incident.
- 15.4.2. Responses to all critical incidents involving awardees are based on the following principles:
- i. support for the awardee: This may include medical, emotional, legal or financial support for the awardee and/or their family members
  - ii. protection of privacy: The privacy of the awardee should be respected. Only information that is reasonably relevant to supporting and managing the awardee should be collected, used or disclosed.
  - iii. Rule of Law: Consistency with the legal framework of the relevant study country's jurisdiction. All parties will endeavour to support the awardee and their family to understand the operation of laws.

### Privacy

- 15.4.3. DFAT respects awardees' privacy. However, in order to ensure they are properly supported in times of crisis, DFAT also requires the disclosure of critical incidents to the extent that the welfare incident has the potential to affect the awardee's ability to successfully complete their scholarship.

- 15.4.4. Awardees agree, when they sign their Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship contract, that institutions and Managing Contractors can share personal information about them and their dependents with DFAT, including sensitive information as defined in the Privacy Act 1988. This enables institutions, managing contractors and case managers to notify DFAT of critical incidents. DFAT will not use or disclose the information for any other purpose.
- 15.4.5. DFAT does not require full disclosure of all personal and sensitive details of a critical incident. DFAT needs only enough information to understand and assess the risk to the awardee and to be confident that they are being appropriately supported. The purpose of the disclosure of information is to enable DFAT and others to properly manage critical incidents affecting awardees and their scholarship conditions.

## Domestic and Gender Violence

- 15.4.6. DFAT takes seriously all incidents of domestic and gender violence.
  - i. Awardees should be aware that domestic and gender violence constitutes an offence under most AAPS countries' law. This may be different to the legal framework in their home country.
  - ii. Any incidence of domestic or gender violence involving an awardee, either as a victim or a perpetrator, is a critical incident.
  - iii. Any such incident should be dealt with sensitively and appropriately and in adherence with the procedural requirements outlined in this chapter.

## 15.5. Critical incident response and management

- 15.5.1. Critical incidents are managed on a case-by-case basis. However, there are some general procedures, outlined in this section, which must be followed for all critical incidents.

- 15.5.2. The institution should confirm key details when they notify DFAT of a critical incident. Ideally this should include:
  - i. who the awardee is
  - ii. what happened, where and when
  - iii. the awardee's current situation
  - iv. what support has already been provided by the institution
  - v. confirmation of whether or not the awardee is presently accompanied in the study country, and the current situation of any accompanying family members, and
  - vi. known next steps.
- 15.5.3. Notification should not be delayed while institutions seek to fill information gaps. If key details are unclear or awaiting confirmation this should be highlighted as part of notification.
- 15.5.4. After notification, record the critical incident as a journal note in the awardee's OASIS record.
  - i. The journal note should be entered immediately after notifying DFAT of the incident and should record what time DFAT was notified.



- ii. Journal notes must be clear, factual and compliant with all relevant country's or Commonwealth legislation and regulations. Institutions should consider the privacy of the awardee and their family and ensure that personal information, and in particular sensitive information as defined in section 6 of the *Privacy Act 1988*, is only included in journal notes to the extent it is reasonably necessary to adequately describe the critical incident.
  - iii. Journal notes should be updated regularly until the critical incident is resolved.
- 15.5.5. After updating OASIS, create and maintain a critical incident report.
  - i. This report must be regularly updated until the incident is formally closed.
  - ii. The institution must be prepared to provide the report to DFAT at short notice.
  - iii. This report should be resubmitted to DFAT every time it is updated by the institution.
- 15.5.6. Once an incident is formally closed the institution must ensure the report is complete and submit this final version to the RP.
- 15.5.7. A template report is provided in [Appendix B](#) of the Policy Handbook.
- 15.5.8. A copy of all critical incident reports should be kept on file by the institution.
- 15.5.9. In the case of ongoing cases, the institution must work closely with DFAT to manage and respond to the critical incident.
- 15.5.10. In addition to these general procedures, please see [Sections 15.6-15.8](#) which outline the responsibilities of all parties in response to different types of critical incidents.
- 15.5.11. DFAT expects that all parties will comply with both the general procedures outlined above and the incident-specific processes outlined below.

## 15.6. Awardees who are victims of or charged with a crime in the study country

- 15.6.1. In their immediate response, institutions shall:
  - i. confirm the wellbeing, safety and whereabouts of the awardee and any accompanying family members
  - ii. ensure that the awardee and their accompanying family members are provided with information about access to medical services, counselling and other support services as required
  - iii. ensure that the awardee is offered information regarding legal representation. This may be by the institution itself or by third party such as staff at a University Law School, a pro-bono legal service, or Legal Aid
  - iv. DFAT does not fund legal assistance
  - v. facilitate the provision of any necessary additional support to the awardee or their family (where possible)
  - vi. consider and action the appropriate ongoing management procedures for this incident (see [Sections 15.6.3 – 15.6.9](#)).
- 15.6.2. Institutions must keep DFAT informed of the dates and the outcomes of any court



hearings. Including where an awardee is required to appear as a witness.

- 15.6.3. If an awardee is detained for more than six weeks the Contribution to Living Expenses (CLE) will be suspended.
  - i. This involves the awardee's scholarship being suspended, and could have implications for their visa.
- 15.6.4. Awardees charged with an offence but released on bail pending a trial or hearing may continue their scholarship, at DFAT's discretion.
- 15.6.5. DFAT will review the status of their scholarship once there is an outcome to the charges.
- 15.6.6. Awardees found guilty of a criminal offence in the study country will have their scholarship terminated.
- 15.6.7. Awardees who are victims of crime may require additional support, which may include
  - i. providing the awardee referrals for counselling services if required
  - ii. liaising with the RP if any other support is considered appropriate
  - iii. if necessary, discussing options such as altered study plans, tutoring or short-term suspensions to allow the awardee to successfully manage their study load during a difficult time
- 15.6.8. Awardees will not be entitled to financial compensation from DFAT if they are victims of crime in the study country.
- 15.6.9. Awardees who are charged with a criminal offence may also require support, particularly to ensure a successful completion of their award if they are not found guilty of an offence.

## 15.7. Unexpected or emergency hospitalisation of an awardee

- 15.7.1. Awardees may experience physical or mental health problems whilst they are on scholarship.
- 15.7.2. More serious or chronic health problems and planned admissions to hospital are welfare incidents (see [Chapter 14](#)).
- 15.7.3. Any instance where an awardee is admitted to hospital unexpectedly or in an emergency is a critical incident. This includes for example any time that:
  - i. an awardee is injured and taken to hospital
  - ii. an awardee is taken to hospital without a referral
  - iii. an awardee is taken to hospital because of an unexpected health emergency, or
  - iv. an awardee has a pre-existing condition (or was already scheduled to attend hospital for tests or treatment) but their health condition changes and they are admitted to hospital earlier or unexpectedly.
- 15.7.4. If the need arises for an awardee to be evacuated due to illness, costs for evacuation will be to the home country only. The award does not cover costs for evacuation to a third country.

15.7.4. Where an awardee is admitted to hospital unexpectedly or in an emergency, institutions should:

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- i. immediately contact the SP and RP and seek approval from SP for any medical costs not covered by the medical cover
- ii. monitor the awardee's health and progress closely
- iii. ensure that the awardee is aware of any limitations of the medical cover, the awardee's responsibilities for any medical or hospital costs that are not covered and the cessation of their CLE after six weeks of hospitalisation.
- iv. provide regular updates to DFAT by updating and re-submitting the critical incident report as often as required.

15.7.5. SP may be required to:

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- i. liaise with the awardee's next of kin in-country
- ii. collect and provide to the institution or hospital additional medical history from the awardee's home.

15.7.6. Where an awardee is seriously ill or hospitalised and is unable to study for an extended period of time, the Contribution to Living Expenses (CLE) must be ceased by the institution after six weeks.

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- i. this involves the awardee's scholarship being suspended, and has implications for their DFAT visa and their ability to remain in the study country.

15.7.7. Where an Awardee is likely to be hospitalised for six or more weeks, institutions must:

- i. notify DFAT as soon as possible in advance of the six week deadline that an awardee is likely to be unfit to return to their studies
- ii. work with DFAT to make a determination regarding whether the scholarship should be suspended or terminated on the grounds of illness or incapacity
- iii. action the suspension or termination of the scholarship as appropriate
- iv. provide the awardee with assistance to return home and, if possible, return to their studies once their health has improved (if possible). See [Section 17.5](#) for more detail.

15.7.8. AAPS medical cover does not cover all conditions. Awardees should check for limitations. Awardees are responsible for any medical costs incurred that are not covered by the medical cover.

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15.7.9. Where an awardee is seriously ill or hospitalised and is unable to study for an extended period of time, the Contribution to Living Expenses (CLE) must be ceased by the institution after six weeks. The awardee will be responsible for all living expenses once the CLE ceases.



15.7.10. Program Areas may be required to provide the awardee with assistance to return home and, if possible, return to their studies once their health has improved (if possible). See [Section 17.5](#) for more detail.

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## 15.8. Death of an Australia Awards Scholarship awardee

15.8.1. DFAT is deeply saddened by the death of any awardee.

15.8.2. If an awardee passes away, in the study country or overseas, DFAT expects all parties to demonstrate appropriate cultural sensitivity, act with discretion and professionalism, and strictly comply with the additional responsibilities outlined in this section.

15.8.3. Where an awardee is accompanied, institutions must:

- i. make immediate contact with the accompanying family members and inform the RP and SP
- ii. if the accompanying family members are not in the study country at the time, confirm their whereabouts if possible.
- iii. facilitate the provision of support to accompanying family members. Support may include access to counselling services, financial support or help organising travel home.
- iv. ascertain the accompanying family's wishes for dealing with the body and inform the SP and RP
- v. being sensitive to the awardee's cultural traditions, implement the accompanying family's wishes.

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15.8.4. Where the Awardee was unaccompanied, institutions should:

- i. confirm this for the SP and RP
- ii. implement the wishes of the awardee's next of kin as communicated to the institution SP
- iii. if required, liaise with the Police and/or hospital about the circumstances of the death
- iv. this information must be passed on to the SP and RP as it is received by the institution.

15.8.5. Institutions will not contact the relevant High Commission or Consulate directly in response to the death of an awardee without first informing the RP and SP, who will facilitate any such discussions.

15.8.6. If repatriation of the awardee's remains is required, institutions must, in consultation with the SP and RP:

- i. seek advice from the Diplomatic/Consular representative concerning the requirements for returning the body to the awardee's home country
- ii. enquire whether the Diplomatic/Consular representatives have a preferred provider of funeral and repatriation services and, if so, make the necessary arrangements with that provider if at all possible.

15.8.7. Institutions may be instructed by the family to make funeral arrangement within the

study country.

- i. At their discretion, and in accordance with the wishes of any accompanying family members, pass details of funeral arrangements on to relevant awardees, institution staff and students, and/or community organisations if appropriate.
- ii. This information should not be made public without first confirming with both the awardee's next of kin and the SP.

15.8.8. If costs are going to be incurred in arranging repatriation of remains or funeral services in the study country, institutions must:

- i. inform the SP in writing, in advance, of all arrangements and costs
- ii. monitor costs and ensure that all costs being incurred are reasonable and appropriate
- iii. liaise with the SP and RP as costs are incurred
- iv. submit separate invoices (outside of OASIS) to the SP for approved costs.

15.8.9. As necessary, institutions will make arrangements for the awardee's possessions, including:

- i. placing the personal effects of the deceased awardee in the hands of the Public Trustee while awaiting instruction from the next of kin
- ii. facilitating access to awardee's bank account for the next of kin.

15.8.10. As requested SP may be required to:

- i. liaise with and provide support to next of kin in-country
- ii. if required, pass on the next of kin's wishes to the SP
- iii. assist with in-country arrangements as appropriate
- iv. liaise with the Partner Government or nominating authority where relevant.

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15.8.11. The RP will:

- i. provide all reasonable support to accompanying family in the study country
- ii. notify and liaise with the relevant Program Area, Managing Contractor and Diplomatic/Consular representatives
- iii. pass on any information required by the institution to carry out its obligations
- iv. reimburse pre-approved associated costs, unless an insurance claim is pending following an accident

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## 16. Natural Disasters

### 16.1. Types of natural disasters

16.1.1. Natural disasters may include, but are not limited to:

- i. Floods
- ii. Cyclones or other significant weather events
- iii. Bushfires
- iv. Earthquakes
- v. Volcanoes
- vi. Tsunamis

### 16.2. Natural disasters – Critical Incidents

16.2.1. Any natural disaster in the study country that affects awardees should be considered a critical incident.

### 16.3. Natural disasters – Welfare Incidents

16.3.1. Any natural disaster in the home country or region of awardees should be considered a welfare incident.

16.3.2. When a natural disaster occurs, the responsibilities of awardees, institutions and DFAT are different to other welfare or critical incidents. The appropriate processes are outlined in this chapter.

### 16.4. Natural disasters in the Study Country

16.4.1. Any natural disaster in the study country that affects awardees should be considered a critical incident.

16.4.2. If a natural disaster affects, or is predicted to affect, any campus that is hosting awardees the following responsibilities apply.

16.4.3. All affected awardees must make contact with their RST Officer as soon as possible.

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16.4.4. Institutions must:

- i. consider the wellbeing of awardees and any accompanying family members as paramount. This includes ensuring affected individuals:
  - have safe and secure accommodation
  - have access to information regarding emergency relief funding where appropriate/available
  - have access to counselling services
  - are able to return to their studies with minimum disruption.
- ii. notify the SP immediately when it becomes aware of a natural disaster
- iii. prepare a group critical incident report to DFAT noting:

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- the number of affected awardees
  - the status (e.g. health, wellbeing and location) of all awardees
  - the anticipated disruption to the academic year
  - if there is prior warning of a natural disaster, what steps are being taken to ensure the welfare of affected awardees
  - if at all possible, the report template included at [AppendixB](#) should be used.
- iv. continue to monitor the situation, keep up-to-date records of the natural disaster and its implications for awardees
- v. report regularly to the SP.
- 16.4.5. If there is prior warning of a natural disaster, notification should be by phone and email and should follow the standard procedure for notification of any critical incident as outlined in [Section 15.3](#) of this document.
- 16.4.6. If there is no prior warning and the natural disaster affects electricity or telecommunications infrastructure, DFAT will accept non-standard notification. However, DFAT does expect all affected institutions to make contact with the SP as soon as possible.

## 16.5. Natural disasters in an awardee's home country

- 16.5.1. Any natural disaster in an awardee's home country or region should be considered a welfare incident.
- 16.5.2. If a natural disaster affects, or is predicted to affect, an awardee's home country or region the following responsibilities apply.
- 16.5.3. If you are conducting fieldwork outside the study country and your home country in an area that experiences a natural disaster please contact your RST immediately. A
- 16.5.4. If you are concerned about the welfare of friends and family in your home country DFAT advises you to speak to your RST Officer.
- 16.5.5. If you are scheduled to return to your home country within 14 days of a natural disaster please contact your RST Officer to confirm your travel arrangements.
- 16.5.6. If any awardees are conducting fieldwork outside the study country and the home country in an area that experiences a natural disaster, DFAT should be notified as per the processes outlined in [Section 14.2](#). I
- 16.5.7. If an awardee reports to their RST Officer concerns about natural disasters overseas, DFAT should be notified as per the processes outlined in [Section 14.2](#).
- 16.5.8. Facilitate the provision of support to any affected awardees and any accompanying family members (where possible).
- 16.5.9. Support may include access to counselling services.
- 16.5.10. If necessary, intervene early with the awardee and discuss options such as altered

study plans, tutoring or short-term suspensions to allow the awardee to successfully manage their study load during a difficult time.

16.5.11. If an awardee is due to return to their home country within 14 days of a natural disaster contact the SP to confirm it is safe for the awardee to return.

16.5.12. If necessary, following consultation with DFAT, institutions may approve an awardee's use of a Reunion Airfare entitlement in advance to enable the awardee to return home on compassionate grounds for a short period of time.

16.5.13. The use of the Reunion Airfare entitlement for this purpose should be noted in the OASIS journal.

16.5.14. The awardee and institution will need to agree on the period of absence. In some cases, it may be more appropriate for the institution to suspend the scholarship.

16.5.15. If travel is restricted or considered unsafe the SP should contact the RP as soon as possible so that this information can be passed on to awardees in the study country.

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16.5.16. If advised by the RP that travel is restricted or considered unsafe for awardees to return, pass this information on to all relevant institutions.

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## 17. Return home

### 17.1. Finalisation of studies

- 17.1.1. The finalisation of studies occurs on the scholarship end date.
- 17.1.2. The scholarship end date is defined differently for coursework and research awardees as well as those for whom the study and home country is the same:
  - i. coursework awardees: either the final examinations date advised by the institution, or the date the awardee departs the study country, whichever comes first
  - ii. research awardees: either the date the awardee submits their thesis/research work for external examination prior to their scholarship end date, or the date the awardee departs the study country if they are submitting their thesis from home, whichever comes first
  - iii. those whose study and home country are the same: DFAT and the institution will discuss a mutually agreed date for the end of your award which may be the final date for examinations.

17.1.3. Awardees will continue to be paid the contribution to living expenses for seven days after the scholarship end date.

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17.1.4. Institutions must update and finalise every awardee's OASIS record within 14 days of the scholarship end date. See [Section 17.7.2](#) for more information on completing an OASIS record.

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17.1.5. If a PhD awardee returns home before submitting their thesis, institutions must keep Posts informed of the expected completion date and any variations.

### 17.2. Return home briefing

- 17.2.1. Institutions are encouraged to offer awardees a return home briefing and completion ceremony where the awardee is unable to attend a formal graduation ceremony.
- 17.2.2. Where the graduation ceremony is held sometime after the completion of studies, there is no award entitlement to cover costs of graduates returning for the graduation ceremony.

17.2.3. Where a return home briefing is undertaken, institutions should:

- i. arrange the briefing for as soon as possible at the beginning of an awardee's final study period (e.g. their final semester or trimester)
- ii. ensure awardees are aware that DFAT will not provide financial support beyond their scholarship end date
- iii. be sensitive to the circumstances the awardee will encounter upon departure and returning to their home country

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- iv. provide advice and assistance where possible on reintegration, encouraging awardees also to revisit their reintegration plans
- v. encourage the awardee to join their local Australia Awards alumni association to remain connected
- vi. invite the SP or RP (whichever is appropriate) to any events in which awardees are participating, particularly the completion ceremony.

### 17.3. Final departure date

- 17.3.1. Awardees are required to leave the study country and return to their home country seven days after their scholarship end date, or before their visa expires, whichever comes first.
- 17.3.2. Immigration authorities in some regional Pacific countries will penalise awardees if they leave after their visa end date. These breaches could incur heavy financial penalties which are the responsibility of the awardee.

17.3.3. Awardees must contact the RST Officer at their institution to arrange their return home travel to leave the study country within seven days of their scholarship end date.

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17.3.4. Awardees are responsible for any changes to the return travel arrangements once their scholarship period ends, including for any costs incurred (e.g. if the flight has been changed).

17.3.5. Institutions must book the completion travel for all awardees.

17.3.6. If an awardee fails to make arrangements with their institution to book their return home travel to leave the study country within seven days of their scholarship end date, or if an awardee fails to board their flight, the institution must notify the SP and RP.

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### 17.4. Remaining in the Study Country after the scholarship end date

- 17.4.1. Awardees are not permitted to remain in the study country after the completion of their AAPs.
- 17.4.2. Approval to remain in the study country for graduation ceremony must be sought from the SP. Visa conditions must be such that they allow for awardees to remain in the study country for this purpose.
- 17.4.3. After completing their studies, awardees are not permitted to remain in the study country with accompanying family members who may be working or studying.
- 17.4.4. Where an awardee and their spouse are both in the study country on Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships, the completing awardee must get

permission from the SP to remain in the study country until their spouse completes their scholarship.

- 17.4.5. Where an awardee intends to remain in the study country while their spouse completes an Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship, the awardee who finishes first must:
- i. notify their RST Officer as early as possible in advance of their completion, ideally at the beginning of their final study period (e.g. their final semester or trimester)
  - ii. ensure that they have a valid visa for this purpose, at their own expense
  - iii. abide by the two-year exclusion period starting from the date that both awardees arrive in the home country when the second scholarship is complete.

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- 17.4.6. Where an awardee intends to remain in the study country while their spouse completes an Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship, the completing awardee's institution must:
- i. contact the SP to obtain a letter of no objection for the awardee who is completing and forward this letter to the awardee
  - ii. if both awardees are attending the same institution, the completion travel entitlement may be added to the spouse's record in OASIS. A variation must be created in each record reducing the amount in the completing awardee's record and increasing the amount in the spouse's record. The reasons for both variations should be recorded in the journal notes in each OASIS record. This must be done before the completing awardee's OASIS record is finalised
  - iii. if the awardees are at different institutions, the completing awardee's institution must liaise with the spouse's institution to complete the necessary OASIS variations in both records. The SP should be included in all correspondence
  - iv. book return home travel for both awardees when the second scholarship is complete.

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## 17.5. Returning home due to illness or accident

- 17.5.1. Where a scholarship is terminated or suspended due to accident, incapacity or illness, in most cases the awardee will be required to return home. .
- 17.5.2. Where an awardee is required to suspend and return home on the grounds of illness or incapacity, DFAT will provide funds for a return airfare in the absence of a reunion entitlement.

### Fit to travel

- 17.5.3. Awardees, along with their doctor, must assess whether an awardee is fit to travel.

- 17.5.4. Awardees must:
- i. demonstrate their fitness to travel with a medical certificate
  - ii. cooperate with the institution and DFAT to organise travel home

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- iii. once at home, stay in contact with the SP about the status of their health and their capacity to return to their studies
  - iv. demonstrate that they are in good health and have the capacity to manage their studies by attending a medical assessment before they return to the study country.
- 17.5.5. Awardees should contact the Post for advice on whether they need to update visa status.

- 17.5.6. Institutions must:
- i. help the awardee to make bookings for their flight home
  - ii. ensure the airline is informed of the nature of the awardee's illness and is consulted on any arrangements that may need to be made, bearing in mind the awardee's right to privacy
  - iii. ensure the awardee has medical clearance to travel
  - iv. ensure the SP is advised of the awardee's travel details
  - v. inform the RP if Customs or Immigration clearance is required.
- 17.5.7. Institutions may help the awardee organise the safe packing, transport or storage of their personal belongings.

- 17.5.8. The SP must:
- i. make arrangements for the awardee's arrival home and their care during transit through a third country (if required)
  - ii. liaise with the awardee and their family to provide reasonable support and assistance to repatriate the awardee; this may require ensuring the awardee will be met at the airport and can travel home from the airport safely
  - iii. ensure there is a management strategy in place for when the awardee arrives home; this may require encouraging the awardee to seek local medical treatment if required, keeping in regular contact with the awardee to monitor their recovery, and ensuring the awardee understands the conditions around their return to the study country (including seeking the prior approval of DFAT)
  - iv. where the scholarship is suspended, organise an assessment of the awardee's health and their capacity to manage their studies before they return from suspension
  - v. approve awardees returning to study country only when they are able to demonstrate they are fit to study and travel, and are likely to successfully complete the remainder of their scholarship
  - vi. help the awardee obtain a new visa if necessary
  - vii. work with the RP to manage arrangements if the awardee is deemed unfit to return to their studies, or if the awardee decides to withdraw from their scholarship.

## Medical escort home

- 17.5.9. Some awardees that are deemed fit to travel may need a medical escort home. This may be a requirement of the awardee's doctors or hospital, the airline, or another party.
- 17.5.10. The SP may approve the institution providing funds for a medical escort. The provision of such funding is at the discretion of the SP.
- 17.5.11. Any expenditure by the institution on medical escorts requires prior written approval from the SP. Approval will only be granted if a medical certificate noting the requirement for a medical escort has been provided.
- 17.5.12. If an awardee needs a medical escort, then they, the institution and DFAT have the following responsibilities.

17.5.13. Awardees must:

- i. demonstrate that they require a medical escort by providing a medical certificate
- ii. cooperate with the institution and DFAT to organise travel home for both themselves and their escort
- iii. once at home, stay in contact with the SP about the status of their health and their capacity to return to their studies
- iv. not return to the study country without the prior approval of DFAT and their institution.

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17.5.14. Institutions must:

- i. arrange for an appropriately qualified medical/nursing escort. If possible the escort should be the same gender as the awardee
- ii. seek the SP approval in writing if a medical escort is to be contracted through a commercial nursing agency, and ensure workers compensation is included as part of the contractual arrangement.

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17.5.15. The SP must:

- i. inform the nominating authority (if appropriate) and next of kin if it is decided that a medical escort is required, bearing in mind the awardee's right to privacy.
- ii. where appropriate, provide funds for the costs of the medical escort (noting that the provision of funds is at DFAT's discretion, and a medical certificate noting the need for an escort must be provided).

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## 17.6. Awardees who are unfit to travel

- 17.6.1. In some circumstances awardees may be unfit to travel due to illness, incapacity or long-term hospitalisation.
- 17.6.2. In the case that an awardee is unfit for travel and remains in the study country, DFAT is not required to provide discretionary financial support for the awardee,
- 17.6.3. If an awardee is unfit to travel while on-scholarship or upon completion of their scholarship, the awardee, the institution and DFAT have the following responsibilities.

17.6.4. Awardees must:

- i. provide a medical certificate to RST which clearly states they are unfit to travel and advises an estimated date that they should be fit
- ii. if required, make necessary visa extension arrangements with the Department of Immigration and meet all costs associated with the visa change
- iii. be responsible for all costs associated with their stay in the study country beyond the scholarship end date
- iv. remain in contact with RST while they are in the study country
- v. depart the study country as soon as they are fit to travel.

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17.6.5. Institutions must:

- i. inform the SP/RP as per the notification procedures for welfare incidents as set out in [Section 14.2](#)
- ii. provide medical certificates and any other supporting information to the SP/RP as soon as possible
- iii. if required, obtain from the SP a letter of no objection and forward this to the awardee
- iv. remain in contact with the awardee and, continue to provide pastoral care while they remain in the study country, continue to monitor the awardee's condition and provide regular updates to the SP.

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- 17.6.6. If an awardee has completed their scholarship, withdraws, or their scholarship is terminated, the institution must organise the awardee's return home travel using the awardee's completion travel allowance as soon as they are fit to travel (see [Section 17.5.3](#)).

17.6.7. The SP must make contact with the awardee's next of kin.

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17.6.8. The RP must:

- i. liaise with the Program Area as necessary.

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## Dependents that are unable to travel

- 17.6.9. DFAT will not provide additional financial support for awardees that are unable to study or travel because a dependent is unwell or unable to travel.

## 17.7. Finalisation and completion of a scholarship record in OASIS

- 17.7.1. As outlined in [Section 17.1.4](#), institutions must update and finalise the OASIS records for every awardee within seven days of the scholarship end date.
- 17.7.2. The finalisation of student records could form an important KPI in the performance of institutions.

- 17.7.3. Within seven days of a awardee's departure, the institution must complete the following in OASIS:

- i. academic completion details
- ii. student's travel details
- iii. follow-up home country contact address (including e-mail address)
- iv. expense all costs associated with the scholarship
- v. scholarship finalisation.

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- 17.7.4. The completion of a scholarship record is an automatic process run by OASIS. The process occurs at the end of the next full pay period after the scholarship end date. For example, if an awardee's studies are finalised on 15 March 2012, the completion will occur on 31 December 2012. If the studies are finalised on 15 December 2011, the completion will occur on 30 June 2012.

- 17.7.5. All expenses must be entered into OASIS before the completion of a scholarship record in OASIS.

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## 17.8. Requests for academic transcripts

- 17.8.1. When an awardee submits their scholarship application form, they agree to authorise DFAT, or its appointed managing contractor, to access or obtain information, including copies of relevant academic records and reports, to monitor their academic performance while on scholarship.
- 17.8.2. Third parties (i.e. anyone outside the institution other than DFAT, the Program Area and a Program Area's managing contractor) are not permitted to access academic transcripts.

- 17.8.3. Where partner governments require an awardee's academic results, the Program Area can ask the awardee to send the transcript directly to the partner government.

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## 18. Alumni

18.1.1. There are DFAT supported alumni networks in more than 20 countries and regions.

18.1.2. Alumni are encouraged to join their local alumni network and to take part in post-award monitoring and evaluation activities (for example, participating in surveys and maintaining their reintegration plans).

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18.1.3. Institutions should encourage Australia Awards recipients to stay connected with the institution, supervisors and peers, including by joining the institution's alumni network.

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18.1.4. Institutions should also encourage awardees to join the local alumni network when they return home and to keep in contact with the Program Area.

18.1.5. The Program Area should actively engage with their alumni. Guidance on good practice activities and advice on alumni engagement is available from the Alumni Manager, Scholarships and Alumni Branch.

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## APPENDIX A:

### Proformas for reunion airfare travel

[Address to the DFAT officer, Program Area /managing contractor]

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is to inform you that I, [insert Scholar's full name], do not intend to bring my family to join me in [insert study country]. I therefore wish to claim the entitlement to a reunion airfare under my scholarship.

I understand that the decision to provide this entitlement rests with DFAT staff at [insert SP].

Yours sincerely,

.....

Australia Awards Scholarship awardee's signature

Date.....

Awardee's name: .....

OASIS No. ....

Witnessed by:

..... Date.....

.....

Print name and title

[Address to the DFAT officer, Program Area/managing contractor]

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is to inform you that I, [insert full name], wish to bring my spouse and or family to join me in [insert study country]. I therefore waive my entitlement to a reunion airfare under my scholarship, as agreed in the contract between DFAT and myself.

Details of my family members are as follows:

Full Name (as shown in the passport)	Date of birth	Relationship to me (spouse, son, daughter)	Country of citizenship	Passport number	Issue date	Expiry date

I understand that by waiving my entitlement, I can no longer claim any reunion airfare during the period of my scholarship.

Yours sincerely,

..... Date.....

Australia Awards Scholarship awardee's signature

Awardee's name: .....

OASIS No. ....

Witnessed by:

..... Date.....

Witness' signature

.....

Print name and title

## APPENDIX B:

### Critical incident report

(To be maintained by institution until incident is closed.)

NAME OF AUSTRALIA AWARDS SCHOLARSHIP AWARDÉE:	OASIS REFERENCE:
CITIZENSHIP:	INSTITUTION:
GENDER:	
SCHOLARSHIP START DATE:	COURSE OF STUDY:
SCHOLARSHIP END DATE:	
SUMMARY OF INCIDENT:	
REPUTATIONAL RISKS:	
CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS:	
RECORD OF MEDIA INTEREST/REPORTING:	
COSTS INCURRED:	
STUDENT CONTACT OFFICER'S NAME:	DATE:



## APPENDIX C:

### DFAT No Objection Letter

#### No Objection Letters

DFAT approval may be required for visa or study permit purposes. They may be required for both awardees and their dependents.

#### Mobilisation

There may be the need for DFAT Program Areas to issue 'No Objection Letters' for an awardee's dependent family members if they do not mobilise at the same time as the awardee.

#### On-Scholarship

When an awardee is on-scholarship, where necessary, the Sending Post issues 'No Objection Letters' to support visa applications for:

visa extensions – when an extension to an awardee's Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship, beyond the original award period, is approved

newborn dependants – when an awardee has a baby during their scholarship period

transferring to a different visa type – when an awardee/dependent transfers to a different visa (e.g. dependant visa or medical visa).

#### Post Scholarship

After an awardee has completed their Scholarship, 'No Objection Letters' to support visa applications for:

short visits – when a DFAT alumnus wants to travel to Australia for a short visit (up to three months) within the two years exclusion period – are issued by Program Areas

post scholarship externally funded studies – when a DFAT alumni returns to Australia to undertake externally funded studies within the two year exclusion period

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## APPENDIX D:

### AAPS Institution websites

University of the South Pacific	<a href="http://www.usp.ac.fj">www.usp.ac.fj</a>
Fiji National University	<a href="http://www.fnu.ac.fj">www.fnu.ac.fj</a>
University of Papua New Guinea	<a href="http://www.upng.ac.pg">www.upng.ac.pg</a>
Pacific Adventist University	<a href="http://www.pau.ac.pg">www.pau.ac.pg</a>
PNG Maritime College	<a href="http://www.pngmc.ac.pg">www.pngmc.ac.pg</a>
PNG University of Technology	<a href="http://www.unitech.ac.pg">www.unitech.ac.pg</a>
University of Goroka	<a href="http://www.uog.ac.pg">www.uog.ac.pg</a>
Divine Word University	<a href="http://www.dwu.ac.pg">www.dwu.ac.pg</a>
University of Natural Resources & Env	<a href="http://www.unre.ac.pg">www.unre.ac.pg</a>

