



Australia Awards

# Australia Awards Scholarships Policy Handbook

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**January 2021**





***The Australia Awards Scholarships Policy Handbook is currently undergoing a review and is subject to future change. A revised Policy Handbook is expected to be released by July 2021.***

**You must read this Australia Awards 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 [australiaawardsdelivery@dfat.gov.au](mailto:australiaawardsdelivery@dfat.gov.au)

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ISBN 1 920861 77 7

Internet: [www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au)

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## Changes to the Australia Awards Scholarships Policy Handbook - 2021

Page	Section	Reason for change
18	Glossary of Terms and Acronyms – Updates to the Deferral definition and addition of COVID-19, PSEAH, OSHC, SAS and Family Member	Updates to the Deferral definition and addition of COVID-19, PSEAH, OSHC, SAS and Family Member
24	1. Australia Awards	Stylistic changes to paragraph three.
29	1.3.10 Institutions – Addition of new dot points at ix. and x.	Update to institutional management responsibilities to comply with the DFAT Child Protection and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policy.
30	2.2.1 Eligibility Criteria – Addition of new dot point at vii.	Update to eligibility criteria to comply with the DFAT Child Protection and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policy.
32	2.4.3 English Language Requirements – Update to validity period of language tests	The validity period of two years has been relaxed for those unable to obtain an English language test due to COVID-19 restrictions. Applicants and awardees must continue to comply with institutional language requirements.
33	2.4.9 Pre-course English Language Training in the Awardees home country	Stylistic changes to paragraph one.
38	2.8.2 Application Process – Update to vii. to reflect a revised validity period for language test results	The validity period of two years has been relaxed for those unable to obtain an English language test due to COVID-19 restrictions. Applicants and awardees must continue to comply with institutional language requirements.
41	3.1.4 Fraud – Addition of an example at iii.	An example has been added to reflect the departure from Australia without notification is a breach of scholarship conditions.
43	4.1 Selection process and criteria	Rewrite to include content from the Australia Awards Scholarships Selection Good Practice Note.

Page	Section	Reason for change
45	4.3.2 Successful and reserve applicants	Removal of reference to notification date of 1 August due to the risk of selection delays due to COVID-19 restrictions. Reference changed to 'generally August'.
45	4.4.1 Advising applicants of selection outcomes	Removal of reference to notification date of 1 August due to the risk of selection delays due to COVID-19 restrictions. Reference changed to 'generally August'.
46	5.1.6 Request for placement and placement offers – Addition of dot point at ii.	Incorporated addition of 'statement of good character or police records check' to comply with the DFAT Child Protection and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policy.
54	6.2.1 Scholarship conditions – Addition of new dot point at xxx.	Added to comply with the DFAT Child Protection and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policy.
56	6.3 The prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and child protection	Rewritten to comply with the DFAT Child Protection and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policy.
57	6.4.2 Deferring an offer	Added reference to COVID-19 travel and border restrictions being sufficient reason for a scholarship to be deferred beyond the 12 months.
57	6.4.4 Deferring an offer	Added reference to COVID-19 travel and border restrictions being sufficient reason for a scholarship to be deferred beyond the 12 months.
66	8.8.1 Post scholarship externally funded program in Australia – Removal of the term 'exceptional awardees'.	Removed reference to 'exceptional' awardees being eligible for post scholarship programs noting COVID-19 may provide more opportunities.
66	8.8.7 Post scholarship externally funded program in Australia – Addition of new dot point vii.	Updated policy on Australia Awards awardees who are a partner of a post scholarship awardee.
67	8.8.8 Post scholarship externally funded program in Australia – Addition of new dot point v.	Reference to adding a copy of a passport with six months validity to the documents required when submitting a

Page	Section	Reason for change
		visa request to return on a post scholarship.
69	9.1.1 – link added to DFAT’s Development for All 2015-2020 strategy.	Added link.
79	9.6.8 – Updated link to Home Affairs site on Student Guardian Visas.	Updated link.
80	9.6.14 (Table 1)	Added COVID-19 related medical tests and quarantine costs.
85	9.10.5 – Updated link to Home Affairs site on prescription medication.	Updated link.
90	10. Scholarship fees and entitlements – Table 1 Summary of scholarship costs.	Added 10.2 COVID-19 Response and 10.3 Professional Development Courses to the table.
91	10.2 COVID-19 Response	Added the COVID-19 Response entitlement.
91	10.3 Professional Development Courses	Added the Professional Development Courses entitlement.
93	10.5.5 Contribution to living expenses – Updated new dot point ii.	Added reference to detained by local and foreign authorities.
93	10.5.7 Contribution to living expenses	Updated paragraph to reflect that failure to notify of an overpayment may result in termination of the awardees scholarship.
95	10.6.9 Overseas Student Health Cover	Updated link.
96	10.8.1 Conditions that apply to travel – Added new dot point ii.	Added reference to COVID-19 related travel costs.
97	10.8.2 Conditions that apply to travel – Added new dot point i.	Added reference to travel to a third country that is not the awardees home country, unless associated with compulsory fieldwork, not being covered under the scholarship.
100	10.11.4 Completion travel – Added new dot point iv.	Added reference to recording COVID-19 related travel costs.

Page	Section	Reason for change
104	12.2.1 Supplementary Academic Support.	Minor alteration to how funds are permitted to be used.
106	12.3.6 Fieldwork – Added reference to ‘unaccompanied’.	Reduce ambiguity around airfare entitlements.
115	13.4.1 Suspensions	Addition of misconduct as a basis for a scholarship suspension.
121	13.9.1 Terminations – Addition of new dot point at viii.	Addition of awardee departure from Australia without notification as grounds for termination.
124	14.1.2 What is a welfare incident? – Addition of new dot point at xi.	Added to comply with the DFAT Child Protection and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policy.
125	14.2.6 DFAT Notification and Procedure for Welfare Incidents	Added email address for the Disability Support Consultant.
133	14.11.2 Absent awardee – Addition of new dot point at iii.	Awardees uncontactable for two weeks will be escalated to a critical incident.
134	15.1.3 What is a critical incident? – Addition of new dot point at iii.	Added reference to an awardee being uncontactable for two weeks is a critical incident.
135	15.2.4 Role of Student Contact Officers	Added email address for the Disability Support Consultant.
136	15.3.5 Notification of critical incidents	Added reference to the Australia Awards Delivery inbox being monitored 24 hours a day.
137	15.3.21 Notification of critical incidents – Addition of new dot point.	Noted the Australia Awards Section will escalate matters involving authorities to the Department of Home Affairs to determine any visa implications for the awardee or accompanying family members.
143	15.8.1 Death of an Australia Awards Scholarship awardee	Removal of original text of 15.8.1.
165	APPENDIX D - COVID-19	Revised policy applicable to the management of the Australia Awards Scholarships program as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Australia Awards Scholarship Cycle

### PROGRAM CREATION

#### DFAT (Australia Awards Section & Program Areas)

- Develop policy & guidelines
- Establish desired program outcomes
- Manage contracts with stakeholders
- Develop and manage scholarship online systems
- Incorporate feedback from alumni into program creation
- Promotional activities
- Liaise with partner governments to identify development objectives and capacity gaps and needs

### PROMOTION

#### Applicant

- Applicants learn about Australia Award Scholarships through advertisement (employer, newspaper, radio, media releases etc.)

#### DFAT Program Areas

- Conduct in-country promotion, targeting candidates in fields that align with the country's development objectives

#### Institutions

- Promote Australia Awards and relevant courses

### AWARDEE SELECTION

#### Awardees

- Submit application form
- Short-listed applicants are interviewed
- Australia Awards Section provide on-demand assistance to Program Areas for selection processes

#### DFAT Program Areas

- Receive enquiries and applications
- Conduct eligibility checks & shortlisting
- Arrange selection processes
- Check application documents
- Request placements at institutions
- Awardees accept offer
- Notify institutions of awardees with disability/special needs

## PRE-DEPARTURE

- **Australia Awards Section** Provide Program Areas with pre-departure materials
- **DFAT Program Areas**
- Notify applicants of selection outcomes
- Arrange in-country language training, learning support and/or other assistance
- Arrange awardees' travel to Australia, assist with health checks and liaison with the Departments of Immigration and Border Protection on visa
- Work with institutions on requirements for awardees with disability/special needs
- Provide pre-departure briefings

### Institutions

- Administer placement offers

## ARRIVAL & ENROLMENT

### Awardees

- Arrive in Australia and undertake an Introductory Academic Program and commence their nominated course at host institution

### Institutions

- Assist awardees to become settled on arrival in Australia
- Provide an Introductory Academic Program (up to 6 weeks)
- Provide awardees with assistance to select appropriate subjects

## COURSE & OUTCOMES

### Institutions

- Monitor awardee progress (including formal surveys)
- Identify and address any issues that may affect awardees' ability to complete their nominated course
- Notify Australia Awards Section of any awardee welfare or critical incidents that may affect an awardee's capacity to successfully complete their scholarship
- Administer variations to the scholarship with approval from Program Areas and Australia Awards Section
- Provide for academic and welfare support needs of awardees (including disability/special needs)

### DFAT Program Areas

- Authorise variations

## SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

### Awardees

- Participate in further education and professional development activities

### Australia Awards Section

- Provide supplementary education and professional development activities to a select group of awardees

### Institutions

- Provide support services as part of their international student program

## GRADUATION & RETURN HOME

### Awardees

- Upon completion of studies, return to home country for at least 2 years

### DFAT Program Areas

- Establish contact with new returnees and provide reintegration assistance
- Provide access to the Australia Awards Alumni Network (AAAN)
- Assist partner organisations in implementing reintegration plans where possible.

### Institutions

- Arrange awardees' return travel
- Notify Program Areas of awardees' departure dates
- Provide advice and assistance on reintegration in home country

## ALUMNI

### Awardees

- Participate in alumni activities, selection panels and pre-departure briefings for new awardees.
- Act as ambassadors to promote Australia in the wider community

### DFAT Program Areas

- Provide professional assistance to alumni

### Australia Awards Section

- Provide funding for Alumni activities
- Provide support to DFAT posts on alumni engagement



## MONITORING & EVALUATION\*

### Awardees

- Awardees participate in on-course and post-course surveys

### DFAT Program Areas

- Conduct tracer studies to measure effectiveness of scholarships, including linkage and leadership outcomes
- **Australia Awards Section** Conduct reviews and evaluations as determined by DFAT policy

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\* Monitoring and evaluation at all stages of the cycle feed into program design, selection and appointment, and provides the basis for reporting to the Minister and Parliament

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Terms and Acronyms	Description
Academic year	Australia's academic year is the same as the calendar year. Academic dates for Australian universities can be found on their websites.
Alumni	Alumni are defined as Australia Award Scholarship or Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research award 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 Australia 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. Master's articulating to a PhD.
Assistive technology	The full range of technological solutions that allow people with disability to be more independent, more connected, and provide opportunities for them to realise their potential as active members of their chosen place of study and communities.
Awardee	A person in receipt of a DFAT funded scholarship.
Carer	Someone who provides personal care, support and assistance to an awardee with disability.
Contribution to living expenses	A fortnightly payment to awardees during the scholarship, at a rate determined by DFAT.
COVID-19	COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a new virus. Symptoms include fever, coughing, a sore throat and shortness of breath.
CRICOS	The Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students.
Deferral	Where an awardee delays the commencement date of their scholarship until later in the year or is unable to commence their scholarship due to COVID-19 border or travel restrictions.

Terms and Acronyms	Description
Dependant	A dependant is defined as a person who is dependent on another person if, at the time of application, the first person has been wholly or substantially reliant on the other person for financial support to meet their basic needs. Additionally, a dependant is a child or stepchild, who has not turned 18 years of age. If aged 18 years or over a dependent child must not have a partner or be engaged to be married.
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Disability Support Consultant	A consultant contracted by Australia Awards Section to ensure in-Australia disability inclusive support is provided to awardees with disability.
Disability Support Statement Form	The form where an awardee with disability outlines what support they believe is required to ensure their equal participation in Australia. This form is analysed by the Disability Support Consultant and allows the Disability Support Consultant to develop the Disability Support Agreement with the awardee with disability, institution and program area.
Disability Support Agreement	DSAs outline reasonable accommodations funded by DFAT. All DSAs are developed in consultation with an awardee with disability, institutions and program areas.
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 Scholarship.
External modes of study	External modes of study can be defined as courses within programs that are available to be taken on an external basis which means that students are not required to attend university daily. Students study independently from home, in some cases using multimedia interactive material on CD-ROM and the Internet.
Family member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- recognised spouse or de facto partner (irrespective of gender or gender identity) of the awardee</li> <li>- child (including an adopted child, a step-child, a foster child or an ex-nuptial child) of the awardee or their recognised spouse or de facto partner</li> <li>- parent or step-parent of the awardee or the awardees recognised spouse or de facto partner</li> </ul>

Terms and Acronyms	Description
Field of study	The vocational area of specialisation or principal subject matter of an Australia Awards 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 undertaken in the home country or Australia as part of an awardee's course.
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.
HA	Department of Home Affairs.
Introductory Academic Program	A compulsory 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 Australian institutions. It may also be used to fulfil an eligibility requirement for the Student visa (subclass 500).
Institution Contact Officer	An officer designated by the institution in Australia to be its main point of contact with DFAT.
In-country	In the applicant's home country, not in Australia.
Institution	Australian tertiary education institution contracted by DFAT to provide education services to awardees.
Long-term award	An award (scholarship) supporting studies of more than six months towards a course of study, and which is recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework.
Managing contractor	A person or organisation that is contracted by a DFAT Program Area to manage the implementation of awards.
Material	Includes articles in print or digital form, documents, equipment, software (including source code and object code versions), goods, information and data stored by any means including all copies and extracts of them.
OASIS	Online Australia Awards Scholarships Information System.

Terms and Acronyms	Description
Overseas	Outside Australia.
OSHC	Overseas Student Health Cover.
Pacific Secondary Schools Scholarship Program (PSSSP)	Secondary School Scholarships offered to applicants from Pacific countries.
Panel	Group of people drawn together for the purposes of selecting awardees.
Partner government	A government that has an agreement relating to Australia Awards with Australia.
Pearson test of English Academic (PTE Academic)	An international standardised test of English language proficiency accepted by Australian institutions. It may also be used to fulfil an eligibility requirement for the Student visa (subclass 500).
Pre-course English	An intensive English program provided to awardees who need additional English language skills before starting their qualification studies (in-country or in Australia).
Placement offer	<p>An offer of enrolment made by the institution to the awardee. The placement offer specifies the course, duration of study and includes an estimate of the associated costs such as academic fees and stipend allowances.</p> <p>Placements (requests and offers) are processed in OASIS between the Program Area and the institution.</p>
Program Area	DFAT country program, often located outside Australia and usually at an Australian diplomatic mission (Embassy or High Commission).
Post-scholarship externally funded program	Study or other activity undertaken in Australia after awardees finish their Australia Award Scholarship studies (e.g. PhD).
Preliminary program	Courses deemed necessary by the institution to enable a postgraduate 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.

Terms and Acronyms	Description
PSEAH	Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
Reasonable adjustments	Measures which an education provider is required to make to ensure students with a disability are enabled to participate in their course of study 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.
Reasonable Accommodations	Reasonable accommodation is the provision of support, modifications and/or adjustments that meet the individual needs of people with disabilities to ensure they enjoy and exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis to others. Reasonable accommodation can include the provision of accessible transportation, sign-language interpreters, accessible meeting venues, and documents in accessible formats.
Reintegration plan	An awardee's proposed strategy for using the new skills and knowledge when they return home at the end of their studies in Australia.
Request for placement	A request on behalf of an awardee made through OASIS by a DFAT Program Area or managing contractor for a placement offer from an institution.
SAS	Supplementary Academic Support
Scholarship	A long-term award (Australia Awards Scholarship) funded by DFAT.
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> <li>(viii) sexual preferences or practices, or</li> <li>(ix) criminal record,</li> </ul> <p>that is also personal information, or</p> <p>(b) health information about an individual, or</p> <p>(c) genetic information about an individual that is not otherwise health information.</p>

Terms and Acronyms	Description
Student Contact Officer	The person appointed by the institution to provide support services to Australia Awards Scholarship awardees.
Suspension	The temporary cessation of an awardee's study program and financial support from DFAT.
Termination	DFATs decision to end an award before the completion of study.
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)	An international standardised test of English language proficiency which is accepted by Australian institutions. It may also be used to fulfil an eligibility requirement for the Student visa (subclass 500).
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 broad education network in Australia which includes 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

The Australia Awards are prestigious international scholarships funded by the Australian Government that aim to contribute to the long-term development needs of Australia's partner countries, in line with global, bilateral and regional agreements. The Australia Awards are a whole-of-government initiative bringing together scholarships administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Education and Training and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), offering the next generation of global leaders an opportunity to undertake study, research and professional development in Australia.

The Australian Government recognises that education develops skills and knowledge, builds enduring people, country and professional links, and has the power to influence positive change. The Awards strive to develop leadership potential and stimulate lasting change by empowering a global network of talented individuals through high-quality education experiences in Australia and overseas. Recipients return home with new ideas and knowledge, and the ability to make a significant contribution to their home countries as leaders in their field.

The Awards also demonstrate Australia's commitment to providing education opportunities to individuals so that they can contribute to their country's development outcomes and contribute to economic growth. For Australia, the Awards build an engaged and influential global network of leaders, advocates and change-makers and establish a network of ambassadors across the world.

The Awards also contribute to the productivity of Australia and the development of people-to-people links between Australia, our regional neighbours and the broader international community.

### 1.1. Australia Awards Scholarships

- 1.1.1. Australia Awards Scholarships demonstrate Australia's commitment to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. They aim to contribute to the long-term development needs of Australia's partner countries in line with Australia's aid priorities and bilateral and regional agreements. They provide opportunities for people from developing countries to undertake full-time undergraduate or postgraduate study at participating Australian universities and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions.
- 1.1.2. The Australian Government encourages equality for all, without discrimination. Australia Awards Scholarships support study by people with disability and aim to empower women to participate in the economy, leadership and education.
- 1.1.3. The study and research opportunities provided by Australia Awards 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 Scholarships, all awardees must return home on completion of their studies so they can contribute to development in their country. Awardees are required to leave Australia 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 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. Overseas Student Health Cover
  - vii. Initial visa expenses.
- 1.1.6. Subject to requirements and eligibility, Australia Awards Scholarships may also cover:
  - i. pre-course English language training fees
  - ii. supplementary academic support
  - iii. fieldwork (for research purposes only)
  - iv. reunion airfare (for unaccompanied awardees).
- 1.1.7. The Australian Government does not provide any financial support for the dependents of awardees. Awardees are responsible, including financially, for their family members who accompany them to Australia.

## 1.2. How to use this scholarships policy handbook

- 1.2.1. This handbook provides the guiding policy and instructions for those managing Australia Awards Scholarships Institutions, applicants or awardees, and other DFAT officers and their managing contractors/sub-contractors. They should be familiar with its content and understand their roles and responsibilities.
- 1.2.2. Institutions, applicants, awardees, DFAT (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. Sections/Subsections starting with {A}: Scholarships policy or instruction most relevant for applicants or awardees.
- 1.2.4. Sections/Subsections starting with {P}: Scholarships policy or instruction most relevant for Program Areas (and their managing contractor and case managers).
- 1.2.5. Sections/Subsections starting with {I}: Scholarships policy or instruction most relevant for institutions.
- 1.2.6. Sections/Subsections starting with {S}: Scholarships policy or instruction most relevant for the Australia Awards Section.
- 1.2.7. The Online Australia Awards Scholarships Information System (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. Detailed descriptions are contained in the OASIS quick reference guides or manuals.
- 1.2.9. {I} This handbook underpins the contract:
  - i. between DFAT and institutions to provide education services, and
  - ii. between the awardee and the Australian Government.
- 1.2.10. {I} 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. This handbook forms part of the contractual arrangement between awardees, institutions and DFAT. It is reviewed on a regular basis 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 following summarises responsibilities for users of this handbook.

### Applicants and awardees

- 1.3.2. {A} Applicants are responsible for reading and understanding the policies underpinning Australia Awards Scholarships.

- 1.3.3. {A} 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.
- 1.3.4. {A} 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.
- 1.3.5. {A} Applicants and awardees must not give false or misleading information at any time in relation to their Australia Awards Scholarships application or while studying in Australia. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the Criminal Code Act 1995.

### Australia Awards Section

- 1.3.6. {S} The Australia Awards Section is responsible for:
  - i. developing and maintaining DFAT scholarship policies and conditions, and ensuring consistency in their administration;
  - ii. assisting Program Areas with promotion, selection and mobilisation processes;
  - iii. determining in-Australia arrangements for Australia Awards Scholarships
  - iv. managing contracts with institutions;
  - v. engaging a Disability Support Consultant to develop Disability Support Agreements in support of awardees with disability;
  - vi. managing OASIS and training for DFAT, managing contractors and institution staff; and
  - vii. engaging with whole-of-government relationships in Canberra.

### DFAT Program Area

- 1.3.7. {P} DFAT Program Areas are in-country offices or DFAT country programs in Canberra (desks), and work collaboratively on the following policy tasks:
  - i. liaising with partner governments and relevant authorities on Australia Awards Scholarships matters;
  - ii. organising the nomination process and promoting awards;
  - iii. processing applications (hardcopy and/or online);
  - iv. managing the Australia Awards Scholarships selection process with assistance from the Australia Awards Section as required;
  - v. ensuring that all selection processes are equitable and transparent and that connections or relationships between

- applicants and staff employed in Program Areas or with managing contractors are disclosed and managed appropriately;
- vi. forwarding placement requests to institutions in OASIS by the deadline, and ensuring that documents accompanying the requests have been properly certified;
  - vii. notifying all applicants of the outcome of the selection process;
  - viii. advising the Australia Awards Section and institutions of awardees with disability who require additional assistance, liaising with the Disability Support Consultant to determine the level of support they require in Australia and providing any pre-departure support for awardees with disability;
  - ix. arranging in-country pre-course English where relevant;
  - x. providing guidance to awardees around the visa application process;
  - xi. arranging travel to Australia for awardees and recording travel details in OASIS;
  - xii. requesting character and/or police checks from awardees and ensuring these are received before awardees depart for Australia;
  - xiii. providing pre-departure briefings to awardees, processing and approving Australia Awards Scholarship variations in OASIS and in accordance with current policy and financial delegations;
  - xiv. overseeing performance and contractual matters relating to the managing contractor (if applicable); and
  - xv. managing engagement with Australia Awards alumni and alumni networks.

- 1.3.8. {P} A number of Program Areas have contracted the in-country management of Australia Awards Scholarships to a managing contractor and sub-contracted Case Managers. For the purposes of this handbook, references to Program Areas may relate to responsibilities of either Program Areas, a managing contractor, or Case Managers depending on each country program's internal arrangements and the division of responsibilities.
- 1.3.9. {P} The roles and responsibilities of managing contractors are generally set out in their agreement with DFAT. However, Program Areas 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

1.3.10. {I} Tertiary education institutions contracted by DFAT are responsible for in-Australia management of awardees in accordance with this handbook and their contract with DFAT. Management responsibilities include:

- i. responding to Program Areas' requests to place 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 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;
- viii. implementing all Disability Support Agreements, including the management of disability support funding and introduction of awardees with a disability to the institution's Disability Unit; and
- ix. conduct an investigation of any allegations about sexual misconduct related to adults or child abuse or exploitation of any kind involving an awardee.
- x. reporting all critical and welfare incidents to DFAT.

1.3.11. {I} Institution Contact Officer:

- i. Institutions 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, such as DFAT's contract with the institution.

1.3.12. {I} Student Contact Officers:

- i. An institution's appointed Student Contact Officers are the points of contact for awardees in relation to Australia Awards Scholarships and anything over and above the role of the institution's student services area. The institution decides how to manage these arrangements, including the roles and responsibilities of the contact officers.

## 2. Applying for an Australia Awards Scholarship

### 2.1. General eligibility

Australia Awards scholarship holders will be expected to succeed academically and meet all challenges posed by studying in Australia. All applicants should be prepared to undertake study in English (which, for most, will not be their mother tongue), live in a foreign country (Australia) with a culture which may be very different to the awardees expectations, and under stringent academic conditions. Maturity and resilience are qualities sought in applicants. Applicants should research Australian conditions and suitability to their needs before applying, as pre-existing conditions may be aggravated by the stress of undertaking the scholarship.

### 2.2. Eligibility criteria

2.2.1. {A} To be eligible to receive an Australia Awards Scholarship, applicants must:

- i. be a minimum of 18 years of age on 1 February of the year of commencing the scholarship;
- ii. be a citizen of a participating country (as listed on the Australia Awards website) and be residing in and applying for the scholarship from their country of citizenship;
- iii. not be a citizen of Australia, hold permanent residency in Australia or be applying for a visa to live in Australia permanently;
- iv. not be married to, 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 but must apply for a Student visa [subclass 500]);
- v. not be current serving military personnel;
- vi. not have previously received a long-term Australia Award unless they have resided outside of Australia for twice the length of the total time that they were in Australia (for example, a previous awardee who has been on an Australia Awards Scholarship in Australia for four years will not be eligible to apply for another Australia Awards Scholarship until they have resided outside Australia for eight years);
- vii. not hold convictions or currently under investigation of criminal activities including those relating to Child Protection and PSEAH;
- viii. recipients under the Pacific Secondary School Scholarship Program (PSSSP) who have completed their secondary school

education in Australia in the year prior are eligible to apply for a long-term Australia Award;

- ix. have satisfied any specific criteria established by the Program Area or the government of the applicant's country of citizenship (e.g. having worked a certain number of years in an appropriate sector);
- x. be able to satisfy the admission requirements of the institution at which the award is to be undertaken (this may mean that Program Areas will need to withdraw an award offer if the recipient cannot satisfy the institution's admission requirements. This may not be known until Program Areas request a placement at selected institutions);
- xi. be able to satisfy all requirements of the Department of Home Affairs to hold a Student Visa. This may mean that the Program Area will need to withdraw an award offer if the recipient cannot satisfy the visa requirements;
- xii. not be applying for a scholarship for a course of study at an academic level lower than already achieved (e.g. be applying for a Master's scholarship when they already hold a PhD); and

applicants must inform the Program Area of any connection or relationship to staff employed at Program Areas (including locally engaged staff at post) or with managing contractors so that the application may be properly and transparently managed.

2.2.2. {P} Program Areas may consider the following exceptions to [2.2.1\(ii\)](#) in relation to applicants being required to apply from their country of citizenship:

- 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.

## 2.3. Country and regional profiles

2.3.1. {A} Applicants must read the participating countries or regional profile for details on the application process, as opening and closing dates for applications, and documentation requirements may vary. The profiles can be found at <https://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia-awards/Pages/participating-countries.aspx>.

## 2.4. English language requirements

- 2.4.1. 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).
- 2.4.2. Note that some institutions may still require evidence of English language proficiency, and Program Areas relying on the above may need to check whether Australian institutions accept applicants from particular regions or with qualifications from English language institutions.
- i. where an applicant or awardee does not meet DFAT's English language requirements (see [Section 2.4.1](#)), the awardee must 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. The 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)
- 2.4.3. Awardees' English language test results must be valid at 1 January of the year in which the awardee is commencing studies in Australia (IELTS, TOEFL scores, and PTE Academic are valid for two years after the test date). Note due to COVID-19 restrictions the two-year requirement has been relaxed, refer [Appendix D Clause 15.2](#). If an institution requires a different test validity timeframe, awardees must meet the institution's requirements.
- 2.4.4. English language scores are not negotiable. All Australia Awards Scholarship awardees must meet the following requirement:
- i. an Academic IELTS result with an overall score of at least 6.5, with no band less than 6.0, or
- ii. an internet based TOEFL score of at least 84, with a minimum of 21 in all subtests, or
- iii. PTE Academic overall score of 58 with no communicative skill score less than 50.
- 2.4.5. Where an institution's academic English language requirement is higher than DFAT's requirement for the main course of study, the awardee must meet the institution's requirement.

### Pre-course English training in Australia

- 2.4.6. Country programs may elect to provide English training to awardees in their home country or the immediate region for a maximum of six months, if the awardee is:



- i. within half a point of IELTS score of 6.5, or
  - ii. within 10 points of the internet-based Test of English as a Foreign Language, or
  - iii. within 7 points of PTE Academic.
- 2.4.7. An awardee who does not meet the institution's requirements may be able to undertake pre-course English language training in Australia. This training may be provided if the awardee is:
  - i. within half a point of the required IELTS, or
  - ii. within 10 points of the internet-based Test of English as a Foreign Language, or
  - iii. within 7 points of PTE Academic.
- 2.4.8. Pre-course English training in Australia is for a maximum of six months.

### **Pre-course English language training in the Awardees home country**

- 2.4.9. {P} Program Areas may elect to provide pre-course English language training to awardees in their home country, prior to mobilisation.
  - i. Program Areas are advised that, on average, six months of English language training will result in advancing
    - Half an IELTS point
    - 10 points TOEFL internet-based or
    - 7 points PTE Academic
  - ii. It is up to Program Areas to determine on what basis they provide in-country English language training, however training should be provided prior to a provisional offer of an award
  - iii. The awardee must complete English language training in time to pass their test and take up their award in the year it is awarded.
- 2.4.10. {P} 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 before or at the time of requesting a placement for the applicant at an institution.
- 2.4.11. {I} Before making a placement offer, institutions should consider the English language training that an awardee may require. The institution may offer an in-Australia Pre-Course English program only if the awardee is within half an IELTS point or 10 points of the TOEFL score or 7 points of the PTE Academic score of the institution's minimum English language requirements.
- 2.4.12. {I} An institution must not accept an awardee if they are unlikely to reach the standard of English required for the main course of studies within six months of PCE training.

## 2.5. Finding an appropriate course and institution

- 2.5.1. Scholarships are available only for courses that are listed on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS), which is the official Australian Government website that lists all Australian education providers that offer courses to people studying in Australia on student visas.
- 2.5.2. {A} Scholarship applicants are not required to have an offer of place at an Australian institution when they apply. However, applicants must have researched their preferred courses, including information provided on institution websites, and ensure that it is included on the CRICOS Register. The only exception is qualifying or preliminary courses, which do not need to be listed in the CRICOS. The Register is available at <http://cricos.education.gov.au>, though applicants are encouraged to research more broadly for information on courses. Applicants are asked to do their research carefully before completing the application form. Once the application is submitted, course preferences cannot be changed.
- 2.5.3. {A} Applicants are expected to undertake research on the Australian institutions that may provide the most appropriate course of study which meets their needs. The Australian Government website [www.studyinaustralia.gov.au](http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au) provides information on this. Applicants must include their course and institution preferences when submitting their application for a Scholarship.
- 2.5.4. {I} Institutions may offer in-country information sessions and 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.
- 2.5.5. {P} Program Areas must confirm that the course selected meets all of the requirements for an Australia award, in particular, the requirement that less than 25% is offered online.
- 2.5.6. {P} Program Areas may also assist applicants to make an informed decision on the most appropriate course of study and location.

## 2.6. Types of courses available to applicants

- 2.6.1. All scholarships must be taken up in the year for which they are awarded. Should an awardee not be able to commence their study by November in the year of the award, the scholarship offer will be withdrawn, the applicant may re-apply for the next Intake.
- 2.6.2. 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 Scholarships may be available for the following types of courses:

- i. Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses;
  - ii. Bachelor's degree (undergraduate) courses;
  - iii. Master's degree courses; and
  - iv. Doctorate degree (PhD) programs
- 2.6.3. Australia Awards Scholarships do not support completion of studies already commenced in Australia.
- 2.6.4. Australia Awards Scholarships do not support study for a lesser degree than one already held by the applicant.
- 2.6.5. {A} 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 courses are supported by an Australia Award. For example, some Program Areas do not provide scholarships for undergraduate or PhD studies.

### **Bachelor's degree**

- 2.6.6. The maximum duration of study permitted for a Bachelor's degree is four years. Double Bachelor's degrees are permitted so long as both are included in the original offer and both can be completed within four years.
- 2.6.7. {I} Institutions may recommend an Honours year for an outstanding awardee undertaking a Bachelor degree by submitting a Course Transfer variation in OASIS (refer [Section 13.5.5](#)).
- 2.6.8. {I} Institutions must seek approval from Program Areas before inviting an awardee to undertake an Honours program. Institutions should provide the awardee's subject results when seeking approval.
- 2.6.9. {I} Approval must be sought by the institution no later than three months before the awardee's scholarship completion date, to allow time for the Program Area to assess the request and, where relevant, seek partner government approval.

### **Master's degree**

- 2.6.10. The maximum duration for a Master's degree program is two years. Where an awardee studying a Master's by Research returns to their home country before their final thesis is submitted, a written submission timeline (agreed by the awardee's supervisor) must be given by the awardee to their Student Contact Officer to be uploaded into OASIS. The maximum duration to submit a thesis after returning home is two years. Awardees studying Master's by Coursework with a research component must submit their research before they return home, or their scholarship completion will be recorded as a fail.
- 2.6.11. Master's degree programs may be offered by coursework, by research or by a combination of coursework and research. Master's 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.

- 2.6.12. Double Master's degrees are permitted only when both are included in the institution's original offer and both courses can be completed within two years.
- 2.6.13. The only exception to this maximum duration is the Master of Diplomacy at the Australian National University (ANU), which the Asia – Pacific College of Diplomacy at the ANU offers as part of double Master's degree program. The Master of Diplomacy is not offered as a stand-alone course and the double degree may take up to three years to complete. Only applicants with a relevant background in diplomacy who will return to the original organisation at the completion of their scholarship will be considered for this course.
- 2.6.14. {A} Applicants wishing to undertake the Master of Diplomacy at the ANU as part of a double Master's degree program must identify this course in their application form. Program Areas have discretion to approve or reject applications for the Master of Diplomacy subject to Program Areas' budget and policy.
- 2.6.15. {P} If Program Areas support an awardee to undertake the Master of Diplomacy as part of a double Master's program, Program Areas are required to record both courses in OASIS at the placement stage with a condition of the awardee passing their first Master's qualification with the required grade.
- 2.6.16. {A} Applicants wishing to undertake a Master's by research must investigate an appropriate supervisor. Australian higher education institutions' websites identify the institution's areas of research strength. Applicants should supply evidence of past research undertaken and highlight outcomes.

## Doctorate programs

- 2.6.17. The maximum duration for a PhD is four years.
- 2.6.18. Where an awardee returns to their home country before submitting a final thesis, the awardee must give a written submission timeline (agreed by the awardees supervisor) to their Student Contact Officer to be uploaded into OASIS. The maximum duration to submit a PhD thesis after returning home is two years.
- 2.6.19. 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

- 2.6.20. 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 Master's, or a Master's leading directly to a PhD.
- 2.6.21. 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](#)).

## Preparation programs

- 2.6.22. Preparation programs are courses deemed necessary by the institution to enable an awardee to successfully complete their qualification in the timeframe specified in CRICOS. Such programs may be formal or informal, for example bridging courses or special intensive courses, and may not lead to a recognised qualification.
- 2.6.23. Preparation programs include:
- pre-course English (see [Section 2.4](#))
  - qualifying or preliminary programs for postgraduate awardees
  - foundation programs for undergraduate and vocational education and training awardees.
- 2.6.24. 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.

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

- 2.7.1. Australia Awards Scholarships are not available for:
- undergraduate courses that require more than four years of study (e.g. medical and veterinary science programs that take five or more years to complete);
  - undergraduate courses that are available at tertiary education institutions in the awardee's home country;
  - training in areas related to nuclear technology or flying aircraft;
  - legal workshops;
  - study by distance or external mode in Australia unless as part of CRICOS registered course where most units are undertaken in the primary institution and the external component is no more than 25 per cent of the total course study load;

- vi. study by distance or external mode while residing outside of Australia unless as part of a CRICOS registered course where:
    - most units are undertaken in Australia;
    - the external component is no more than 25 per cent of the total course study load; and
    - with the prior approval of the Assistant Secretary, Scholarships and Alumni Branch, DFAT.
  - vii. military training; and
  - viii. training in counter-subversion methods, the suppression of political dissent or intelligence procurement.
- 2.7.2. Scholarships will not be available for courses of study in Australia where the applicant already has achieved that qualification and the qualification is deemed to be equivalent to the Australian qualification at the same level.
- 2.7.3. This is not an exhaustive list and excluded programs of study are not limited to the above.

## 2.8. Application process

- 2.8.1. {A} 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://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/oasis-applicant-user-guide.aspx>.
- 2.8.2. {A} Applicants must supply documents to support their scholarship application including, but not 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). Master's 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://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia->

[awards/pages/how-to-apply-for-an-australia-awards-scholarship.aspx](#);

- vii. a certified copy of original English language test (IELTS OR TOEFL) 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 2020 for an application for a scholarship to commence studies in 2022). Note due to COVID-19 restrictions the two-year requirement has been relaxed, refer [Appendix D Clause 15.2](#); and
- viii. PhD candidates only - evidence (e.g. letter or email communication) that the applicant has received in-principle support for their research topic from a potential supervisor.

2.8.3. {A} See [Section 2.8.7](#) – 2.8.9 for certification requirements.

2.8.4. {A} PhD candidates only – if an Australia Awards Scholarship is awarded, an additional research proposal for Program Areas to submit to institutions.

2.8.5. Country and Regional Profiles detail the opening and closing dates for applications and which method of application is acceptable for that country or region. While all applicants are encouraged to apply online, not all Program Areas are able to receive applications via the online application facility in OASIS. Program Area websites contain specific information about application methods.

2.8.6. {P} Program Areas may need to submit, on behalf of a successful applicant, an application form for the relevant institution in addition to the request for placement to meet the institution's specific enrolment requirements.

### Document certification

2.8.7. Documents accompanying a scholarship application that require certification must be certified in accordance with the requirements below.

2.8.8. 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.

2.8.9. 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.
- 2.8.10. Where an institution has specific document certification requirements, the awardee must meet the institution's requirements.
- 2.8.11. {P} Program Areas 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 Australian institution.
- 2.8.12. {P} Where an institution has additional certification requirements beyond those detailed in Sections 2.8.7-2.8.9, the Program Area will provide a letter to the institution confirming that it has viewed the original documents and certified copies. Further guidance, including a template for this letter, can be found in OASIS under Support Materials – Document Certification Fact Sheet.
- 2.8.13. {A} Applicants may not verify their own documents, even if they belong to one of the categories listed in [Section 2.8.8](#).
- 2.8.14. {A} Documents cannot be verified by a person directly related to the applicant.
- 2.8.15. {A} 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.



### 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.
- 3.1.3. 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 based on incorrect or incomplete information.
- 3.1.4. The following could constitute fraud in the context of the Australia Awards:
  - i. false supporting documents in an application;
  - ii. false information on forms;
  - iii. not disclosing relevant information, e.g. returning home without approval from DFAT or the relevant institution;
  - iv. not disclosing a conflict of interest (e.g. a relationship with decision-makers)
  - v. deliberately claiming a benefit not entitled to (e.g. claiming reunion travel when dependent family members are with the awardee in Australia, or changing travel arrangements to include or extend a stopover, where this is not permitted under the policy); and
  - vi. plagiarism
- 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. Australia Awards Section and DFAT's Fraud Control section must be notified in all cases of suspected fraud.
- 3.1.6. {A} When submitting an 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 Scholarship made on the basis of incorrect or incomplete information. Applicants should carefully read the Fraud clause in the contract signed by all awardees prior to beginning their scholarship.
- 3.1.7. {I} Institutions must report immediately to the Australia Awards Section via email when it detects or suspects that an awardee has committed fraud.

3.1.8. {P} Program Areas must report immediately to DFAT's Fraud Control Section and copy the Australia Awards Section via email when it detects or suspects that an awardee has committed fraud.

## 4. Selection

### 4.1. Selection process and criteria

- 4.1.1. All applications for Australia Awards are considered on merit providing equal opportunity to all applicants.
- 4.1.2. Program Areas manage the selection process in each country/region and the selection process is detailed in the relevant Country or Region Profile.
- 4.1.3. The selection committee must be chaired by a senior DFAT officer (First Secretary level or above). The selection process must include an interview of short-listed candidates (approved by a senior DFAT officer at First Secretary level or above) and may include other activities such as group participation sessions to assess the suitability of applicants.
- 4.1.4. 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://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia-awards/pages/participating-countries.aspx>).
- 4.1.5. The table below is a guide for applicants to understand how Program Areas might score an applicant.

Outstanding: greater than or equal to 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: greater than or equal to 80% and less than or equal to 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: greater than or equal to 70% and less than or equal to 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: greater than or equal to 60% and less than or equal to 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 contribute to their field of activity.
Limited: less than 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.

- 4.1.6. {P} 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 development strategy. Applicants who demonstrate a significant ability to develop networks while in Australia and promote Australia in their home country on completion of their studies will be favourably considered. Further guidance on the undertaking of a selection process is available in the 'Australia Awards Scholarships Selections – Good Practice Note' available in OASIS.

## 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. Applicants must propose a reintegration plan as part of their application.
- 4.2.2. {A} 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 in Australia and the possible constraints they think could prevent them from achieving these tasks and mitigation strategies to overcome challenges.
- 4.2.3. {A} Awardees may be required to update their reintegration plan at any stage of their scholarship, including as part of on-award enrichment training.
- 4.2.4. {P} Program Areas will 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.

- 4.2.5. {P} 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 Program Area's Australia Awards 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. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application upon completion of the Australia Awards Scholarships selection process (generally August).
- 4.3.3. Successful candidates become awardees once the candidate has signed the Scholarship contract with the Commonwealth of Australia after a placement offer has been received from an Australian university.
- 4.3.4. {P} Scholarship numbers are determined by the budget available to fund them. If the opportunity arises, reserve candidates will be selected from high quality applicants who have not received an award if they meet all eligibility criteria and are deemed suitable for placement.

### 4.4. Advising applicants of selection outcomes

- 4.4.1. {P} Program Areas will inform applicants of the outcomes of their Australia Awards Scholarships selection process upon completion (generally August).

## 5. Placement

### 5.1. Request for placement and placement offers

- 5.1.1. After finalising awardee selection, Program Areas 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 (including English language requirements) and is assessed as being capable of successfully completing the nominated course within the specified period (as recorded on the CRICOS website).
  - i. placements of awardees with disability, involve additional considerations and requirements (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.
- 5.1.4. {A} Successful applicants selected to undertake a PhD or Master's 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.
- 5.1.5. {P} Program Areas must use OASIS to request placements. Requests sent outside OASIS may not be considered by institutions.
- 5.1.6. {P} Program Areas will initiate requests for placement in OASIS **by 25 August for first semester** commencement and **by 15 March for second semester** commencement. 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 have been uploaded or recorded in OASIS:
    - properly certified supporting documentation,
    - the awardee's emergency contact details,
    - the dependents' information, where relevant,
    - the awardee's passport number and expiry date, and
    - statement of good character or police records check document
  - iii. for PhD awardees, the following has been uploaded into OASIS:

- the letter or email communication, as outlined at [Section 2.8.2 viii](#), from the applicant's potential supervisor giving in-principle support for the research proposal, and
- the supporting documents outlined at [Section 2.8.2](#).

5.1.7. {P} If the institution requests further information from the Program Area to process the request for placement, the Program Area 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 5.1.6](#).

5.1.8. {P} Placements involving periods of more than six weeks, where the awardee is not enrolled (excluding semester breaks), will not be approved. If a long period without study is unavoidable between pre-course English, foundation programs or articulated programs and the main course of study, alternative options should be considered such as enrolment in summer or winter courses or suspension (refer [Section 13.4](#)).

5.1.9. {P} If an applicant's first preference is declined by an institution, the Program Area may approach the second institution. The second preference institution will process the request for placement in OASIS in line with the process above and the timeframe outlined in [Section 5.1.11 – 5.1.15](#).

5.1.10. {P} If a successful applicant cannot be placed in either of their preferred courses, the Program Area must advise the applicant and where relevant, their nominating authority, that no placement can be offered. In such circumstances, the Program Area will withdraw the scholarship offer.

5.1.11. {P} Program Areas will not attempt to negotiate with an institution to accept a scholarship holder who does not meet the institutions minimum requirements.

5.1.12. {I} Institutions must respond to completed placement requests received in OASIS:

- i. within 15 business days for coursework studies; and
- ii. within 30 business days for research studies.

The institution may respond to a placement request in OASIS by:

- iii. declining to offer a place at the institution and stating the reasons why;
- iv. offering a place conditionally; and
- v. offering a place unconditionally.

5.1.13. {I} 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, to attempt to meet the timeframe at [Section 5.1.6](#).

5.1.14. {I} If the institution does not respond to a completed request within the stipulated timeframe the Program Area may withdraw the placement from that institution at its discretion.

5.1.15. {I} The institution should ensure placement offers include:

- i. the Introductory Academic Program (an example of an IAP is at Annex A);
- 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. recognition of credit received for prior study and course length, fees and entitlements adjusted accordingly where appropriate; and
- viii. 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).

## 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 CRICOS. 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:

- i. pre-course English (see [Section 2.4.6 – 2.4.8](#))
- ii. qualifying or preliminary programs for postgraduate awardees
- iii. foundation programs for undergraduate and vocational education and training awardees.

5.2.3. {I} 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.

### 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 an awardee does not meet the required standard for direct entry into their chosen course.
- 5.2.5. Awardees may attend in-country foundation programs as part of their scholarship program.
- 5.2.6. Approval from the Australia Awards Section 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. {A} Awardees undertaking preparatory programs in Australia 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.
- 5.2.8. {I} 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 in CRICOS. 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](#)).

### Articulated study programs

- 5.2.9. For articulated study programs undertaken at more than one institution, the institution offering the higher course of study is deemed to be the primary institution. The primary institution 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 in OASIS) as part of the scholarship offer.

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

- 5.2.11. Program Areas 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.

- 5.2.12. {P} Program Areas will 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 5.1.15](#).
- 5.2.13. {P} Once the Program Area has reviewed the placement offer and is satisfied that it meets the requirements above, the Program Areas must:
- i. generate a letter of offer and contract in OASIS, ensuring that specific conditions required by the institution are included
  - ii. send the letter of offer and contract to the successful applicant to sign
  - iii. upload the signed contract into OASIS once it is received from the applicant
  - iv. record the acceptance (or rejection) of the placement offer in OASIS.

## 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. {A} Successful applicants will receive a scholarship letter of offer and contract from the Program Areas 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 Program Area.

### 6.2. Scholarship conditions

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

#### **Obligations {A}**

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 Program Area and participate in the institution's compulsory Introductory Academic Program when the awardee arrives in Australia;
- 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, sit examinations and complete their course of study and Scholarship by the scholarship end date;
- iv. obey the laws that apply in Australia and act in a manner that will not bring disrepute to DFAT; and
- v. leave Australia for a minimum of two years at the end of, or termination of, the awardee's Scholarship and acknowledge that any time spent in Australia during the two-year exclusion period will extend the end date of the exclusion period.

#### **During the Scholarship period the awardee must: {A}**

- vi. engage in a full-time program of study at all times, unless approved otherwise by DFAT;
- vii. make satisfactory academic progress as determined by the institution and maintain good academic conduct;

- viii. reside in Australia 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 Student Contact Officer, recognising that the Student Contact Officer is the first point of contact for the awardees dealing with DFAT; and
- x. work with DFAT and the Student Contact Officer if a welfare or critical incident occurs.
- xi. If you publish any Material while on scholarship, you agree:
  - a) To acknowledge that you are an Australia Awards scholar, supported by the Australian Government; and
  - b) To use a disclaimer which makes clear that the views and opinions expressed in the Material are those of you, the author, and do not represent the views of the Australian Government.

#### **Visa {A}**

- xii. the awardee agrees to satisfy all visa requirements determined by the Department of Home Affairs to hold a Student visa (subclass 500) as set out at <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/student-500#Eligibility> . See also: [Section 8.1](#);
- xiii. the awardee acknowledges that the Department of Home Affairs issues visas for entry into Australia and that DFAT can provide support for certain visas but has no control over visa decisions made by the Department of Home Affairs;
- xiv. the awardee acknowledges that, should their visa be cancelled because the visa conditions have been breached, the Department of Home Affairs may impose an exclusion period during which the awardee may not return to Australia (Awardees should be aware that the Department of Home Affairs takes an individual's immigration history (including cancellations) into account when making visa decisions); and
- xv. the awardee acknowledges that if, during their Scholarship, they apply (including as part of a joint or family application) for a visa other than the Student visa (subclass 500, then their Scholarship will be terminated, and they will incur a debt to the Commonwealth of Australia for the total accrued cost of their scholarship.

#### **Financial obligations {A}**

- xvi. 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;

- xvii. the awardee acknowledges that the awardee is responsible for how they budget any Scholarship benefits the awardee receives to pay their living expenses; and
- xviii. 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 Australia at the end of the Scholarship
  - 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, or
  - If the awardee departs Australia with the intention of completing their scholarship from home without notifying the institution or DFAT of their intent.

#### **Medical expenses {A}**

- xix. the awardee will advise DFAT of any pre-existing medical condition, which may affect their ability to study; and
- xx. the awardee acknowledges that the awardee's Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) may not cover all medical expenses, and that the awardee is liable for any additional expenses incurred by them and by their dependents during their Scholarship.

#### **Other scholarships and studies {A}**

- xxi. the awardee will not hold another Australian Government scholarship, other than a DFAT supplementary award, at the same time as the Australia Awards Scholarship, or begin studying another course; and
- xxii. the awardee will not undertake any additional off scholarship studies during their time in Australia on the Student visa (subclass 500).

#### **Change of circumstances {A}**

- xxiii. the awardee will advise DFAT immediately, via the Student Contact Officer 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; and
- xxiv. the awardee will advise DFAT immediately, via the Student Contact Officer at the institution, if the awardee marries a person who is an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or is a permanent resident in Australia or New Zealand. A change to the awardee's citizenship or residency status may have implications for the Scholarship and contravene the visa conditions.

### **Changes to Scholarship or course of study {A}**

- xxv. the awardee will discuss with the Student Contact Officer at the institution any proposed changes to the approved course of study for which the Scholarship is offered;
- xxvi. 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; and
- xxvii. the awardee acknowledges that DFAT may amend the period of the Scholarship or Scholarship benefits at its discretion.

### **Termination and Suspension of Scholarship {A}**

- xxviii. the awardee acknowledges that the awardee holds the Australia Awards 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 other than the Student visa (subclass 500) or
  - is found guilty of a crime;
- xxix. 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.
- xxx. under investigation by Australian or local authorities or by the host university, of misconduct related to the abuse of children or sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment of adults.

- xxxi. 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; and
- xxxii. if the awardee's scholarship is suspended the awardee will return to their home country (with any dependents) for the duration of the suspension and will seek the prior approval of DFAT and the institution before returning to Australia.

#### **Privacy {A}**

- xxxiii. the awardee also acknowledges that the awardee is aware that:
- the Privacy Act 1988 governs the handling of personal information by Australian Government agencies <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/the-privacy-act/>, and
  - DFAT's privacy policy is available at <http://www.dfat.gov.au/privacy.html>;
- xxxiv. the awardee consents to their personal information and that of their family members and dependents, 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 Australian immigration authorities, Australian tertiary institutions, 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 Scholarships Policy Handbook as updated from time to time;
- xxxv. 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 his 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;
- xxxvi. 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 Scholarship and any welfare incidents or critical incidents affecting awardees and their scholarship conditions;
- xxxvii. the awardee acknowledges that from time to time the Australian Government may produce media releases for publication in Australia and in the awardee's home country in various forms, in relation to the Scholarship or other development activities (promotional material); and

xxxviii. 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 Australia and their professional achievements either before or after receiving the Scholarship, and including it in such promotional material.

### 6.3. The prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and child protection

- 6.3.1. DFAT has clear and strict policies in relation to managing and reducing risks of sexual exploitation abuse and harassment and child abuse and exploitation.
- 6.3.2. Awardees must act in accordance with and comply with DFAT's Child Protection Policy and PSEAH Policy principles and sign the Code of Conduct section of their scholarship contract to acknowledge that they have read and understood these policies.
- 6.3.3. If an Awardee is involved in sexual misconduct or child abuse in Australia, the Welfare and Critical Incident Management process applies.
- 6.3.4. Allegations about sexual misconduct related to adults or child abuse or exploitation of any kind, involving an Awardee will be handled in accordance with relevant Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory laws and with DFAT policy.
- 6.3.5. DFAT reserves its right to terminate the Scholarship and withdraw its support at any time, including if the Awardee conducts themselves in a manner which is considered to have transgressed acceptable Australian community standards.
- 6.3.6. Child abuse and exploitation includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which may result in potential or actual harm to a child's health and welfare. For more information on DFAT's Child Protection Policy, see <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/child-protection-policy.aspx>
- 6.3.7. DFAT's PSEAH policy covers sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment of adults. For more information on DFAT's PSEAH Policy see <https://dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/preventing-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment/Pages/default.aspx>
- 6.3.8. {A} Awardees must sign the DFAT Child Protection and PSEAH Code of Conduct section of their scholarship contract.
- 6.3.9. {P} Program Areas must provide a copy of both the DFAT Preventing Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment and Child Protection Policies with the Australia Awards Scholarship offer and contract, and check that awardees have signed the Child Protection Code of Conduct section of their scholarship contract.



{I} Institutions and its Personnel are similarly required to abide by and have in place processes to ensure compliance with:

- (a) DFAT's *Child Protection Policy*, accessible on the DFAT website at: [www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au); and
- (b) DFAT's *Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy*, accessible on the DFAT website at: [www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au).

- 6.3.10. {P} In accordance with DFAT's Child Protection and PSEAH policies institutions must report immediately to DFAT any incidents or allegations of sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, incidents, allegations or suspicions of child abuse of any kind.
- 6.3.11. {P} In accordance with DFAT policy, institutions must ensure they have adequate and appropriate process and systems in place to undertake investigations.

## 6.4. Deferring an offer

- 6.4.1. At DFAT's discretion, an Australia Awards Scholarship may be deferred to allow the awardee to commence later within the academic year for which the scholarship is offered. A deferral to commence later within the academic year may be approved for a variety of reasons including pregnancy, visa issues and family or work responsibilities. Awardees may be responsible for visa extension costs resulting from deferrals.
- 6.4.2. Only in very exceptional cases where the cause is beyond the control of the awardee (e.g. border or travel restrictions as a result of COVID-19, visa processing delays or where foundation courses are only available in first semester) may an Australia Awards Scholarship be deferred until the following academic year or later if impacted by COVID-19 related border restrictions. Work or family commitments, health issues (excluding disability) or not being able to meet the English language requirements are **not acceptable** reasons for deferral beyond the year for which the scholarship is offered. The awardee will need to decline the offer and reapply when they are ready to start their studies in Australia.
- 6.4.3. {A} Awardees requesting a deferral must do so after they have accepted their scholarship and signed their scholarship contract, and before they arrive in Australia. 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 in their original contract with DFAT.
- 6.4.4. {A} Awardees should be aware that in some cases, the Program Area or the institution may request or require a deferral of their scholarship, for example due to COVID-19 border or travel restrictions

or to ensure that awardees with a 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.

6.4.5. {A} Awardees who are granted a deferral must complete the next available Initial Academic Program.

6.4.6. {P} Only Program Areas, or DFAT Scholarships and Alumni Branch, in consultation with partner governments where relevant, can approve a scholarship deferral. Program Areas are responsible for processing the deferral variation in OASIS.

6.4.7. {I} 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 Australia in time to undertake an IAP and start on the course start date.

## 7. Pre-departure

### 7.1. Pre-departure information

- 7.1.1. Pre-departure briefings provide essential information that awardees need when they arrive in Australia such as advice about living and studying in Australia. The briefings are also an opportunity to provide information about award conditions, including entitlements and obligations, such as the requirement that Awardees leave Australia and return to their home country for a minimum period of two years after completing their Australia Awards Scholarship.
- 7.1.2. The briefing provides cultural information about Australia to assist awardees to settle into Australia and their institution quickly, setting them up for success within the timeframe provided in their contract.
- 7.1.3. {A} It is compulsory for awardees to participate in a pre-departure briefing.
- 7.1.4. {A} Family members of awardees, especially those who expect to accompany them to Australia, 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. {I} The institution:
- must provide each awardee with an institution information kit before they depart for Australia
  - 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 Australia; and
  - 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. {I} Institutions should also provide information kits to the Australia Awards Section and the Program Areas on request.
- 7.1.7. {I} As a minimum, the institution information kit must include information that is required under the standards found in the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education of Overseas Students 2017 (<https://internationaleducation.gov.au/Regulatory-Information/Education-Services-for-Overseas-Students-ESOS-Legislative-Framework/National-Code/Pages/default.aspx>), 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. {P} Program Areas must:

- i. provide the pre-departure briefing at least one month before the awardee departs for Australia;
- ii. arrange and cover the costs for awardees to attend this briefing; and
- iii. provide the pre-departure guidebook to awardees as early as possible after they accept their Australia Award offer. These resources will assist awardees to prepare for their arrival, and to make the most of the opportunity to live and study in Australia.

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

7.1.10. {P} Awardees should be made aware that there are various support networks available to them, and that they should seek help at an early stage when experiencing difficulty. In particular, awardees should be aware that emergency services in Australia are available to assist when the situation warrants and should not be seen as intimidating.

7.1.11. {S} The Australia Awards Section provides a pre-departure guidebook to Program Areas.

## 7.2. Family

7.2.1. The Australian Government does not provide any financial or other support for the dependents of awardees.

7.2.2. {A} Applicants must identify at the scholarship application stage if they intend to bring family members with them to Australia.

7.2.3. {A} Awardees are responsible, including financially responsible, for their family members who accompany them to Australia.

7.2.4. {A} Awardees are not permitted to leave dependent children who accompany them to Australia, under 18 years of age, on their own during any awardee's absence from Australia during their scholarship without having arranged a guardian to care for them.

7.2.5. {A} Awardees who intend to bring family with them are strongly encouraged to come to Australia 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. {A} Awardees are responsible for making arrangements for accommodation, as well as schooling and childcare for dependents. The Student Contact Officer at their institution may be able to provide information but is not responsible for making arrangements on the awardee's behalf.
- 7.2.7. {A} Awardees should contact the Department of Home Affairs for information about current visa requirements for accompanying family. Visit [www.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au) for details.
- 7.2.8. {I} While awardees are responsible for the visa application, including all costs associated with the visa requirements for their dependents, institutions may provide documentation (for example, a letter confirming enrolment) requested by the Department of Home Affairs to assist visas for accompanying family to be arranged in an efficient and timely manner.

## 8. Visas

### 8.1. Visa requirements for awardees

- 8.1.1. Awardees need to have a Student visa (subclass 500) to travel to and study in Australia.
- 8.1.2. Awardees who hold dual citizenship must apply for their visa and travel to Australia using the passport of the eligible country for which they have received their Australia Awards Scholarship.
- 8.1.3. Awardees will need to meet the Department of Home Affairs' financial, health and character requirements and demonstrate that their intention to stay temporarily in Australia is genuine.
- 8.1.4. The Department of Home Affairs advises that in some circumstances applications may take up to three months to process if further medical or character assessments are required.
- 8.1.5. {A} Awardees must ensure they have a valid passport and visa for the whole time that they are on-scholarship.
- 8.1.6. {A} Awardees must apply for their visa as soon as possible after accepting the scholarship, and ensure they read the information on the Student visa (subclass 500), and the various requirements at:
  - i. <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/student-500#Eligibility>.
  - ii. <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/web-evidentiary-tool>

### 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 Australia.
- 8.2.2. An awardee's accompanying dependent family members must have a Student visa (subclass 500) in order to travel to and remain in Australia for the duration of the awardee's study.
- 8.2.3. Awardees are responsible for the visa application, including all costs associated with the visa requirements for their dependents.
- 8.2.4. {A} An awardee must read the information on visa requirements for dependent family members at:

[Subclass 500 Student visa](#)

### 8.3. Visa requirements for awardees with disability

- 8.3.1. Awardees with disability need to have a Student Visa (subclass 500) to travel to and study in Australia.
- 8.3.2. To be granted a visa, awardees with disability may need to provide additional information to the Department of Home Affairs beyond the standard requirements for a visa application.
- 8.3.3. All parties should be aware that the Department of Home Affairs may take a longer period of time to assess visa applications for awardees with disability.
- 8.3.4. {P} Program Areas are required to directly assist awardees with disability with their visa applications in order to ensure that the Department of Home Affairs in-country receives all the information they require to make a determination in a timely manner.
- 8.3.5. {P} Program Areas should assist awardees with disability begin the process of submitting a visa application as soon as possible after selection.
- 8.3.6. {P} DFAT sponsorship for awardees does not provide for waiver of Department of Home Affairs visa medical requirements. Program areas are to abide by Home Affairs decisions and not seek to change those decisions.
- 8.3.7. {A} Awardees with disability are required to work closely with the Program Area and the Department of Home Affairs on their visa applications.
- 8.3.8. {A} Awardees with disability should inform the Program Area immediately if the Department of Home Affairs requests additional information or letters of support.
- 8.3.9. {A} Awardees with disability should discuss with the Disability Support Consultant and Program Area as part of their disability assessment whether they require the support of a carer for all or part of their scholarship period in Australia. See [Chapter 9](#) for further information about disability assessments and visa requirements for carers.
- 8.3.10. {P} Program Areas are required to liaise with the awardee, the carer, and the Department of Home Affairs in-country to ensure that carers apply for the most appropriate visa for their case.
- 8.3.11. {P} Program Areas should work closely with the Department of Home Affairs in-country on these visa applications and to provide additional information including to assist with visa applications for carers.
- 8.3.12. {P} Program areas are to engage with the DFAT Disability Support Consultant (located in Canberra) as soon as practical to assist with the process.

## 8.4. Visa obligations

- 8.4.1. Australia Awards 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 Australia and not return for at least two years on its completion or termination. This condition supports the objectives of Australia's aid program by supporting the applicant to use the knowledge and expertise acquired during their scholarship for capacity building in their home country.
- 8.4.2. To support this objective, Australian migration legislation has a number of provisions which combine to ensure that a visa applicant will leave Australia at the completion of their scholarship for a period of two years.
- 8.4.3. {A} Awardees who hold a Student visa (subclass 500) must uphold the visa conditions while studying and living in Australia or the visa may be cancelled and the scholarship terminated.
- 8.4.4. {A} Awardees are required to leave Australia and return to their home country within 30 days of their scholarship end date, or before their visa expires, whichever comes first. Awardees who do not adhere to this requirement will be no longer supported by DFAT after their scholarship end date.
- 8.4.5. {A} The Australia Awards Section will advise the Department of Home Affairs that it has withdrawn support for an awardee's visa from 30 days after the end date of the awardee's Australia Awards Scholarship.
- 8.4.6. {A} Awardees should note that in many cases the scholarship conditions overlap with visa conditions. Breaching the visa conditions, (e.g. working more than the allowed number of hours) 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.
- 8.4.7. {I} An institution must notify DFAT immediately by email if it becomes aware of an awardee who is not upholding their visa obligations.
- 8.4.8. {S} When an awardee does not uphold the conditions of their visa, the Australia Awards Section will advise the awardee that their scholarship is to be terminated and will also notify the Department of Home Affairs that DFAT has withdrawn its support for the visa.

## 8.5. Applying for a further student visa (scholarship extension)

- 8.5.1. It is a condition of the Student visa (subclass 500) that awardees do not stay in Australia after the visa end date.



- 8.5.2. In circumstances where an extension to an awardee's scholarship has been approved by DFAT, the awardee must apply for a new DFAT-sponsored Student visa (subclass 500) to stay in Australia beyond their initial visa expiry date. DFAT must indicate its support by providing a 'No Objection Letter' to the awardee to include in their visa application to the Department of Home Affairs.
- 8.5.3. {A} Awardees must obtain support from the Australia Awards Section before the Department of Home Affairs can consider the awardee's application for a further student visa to remain in Australia past their initial visa expiry date.
- 8.5.4. {A} Costs of visa extension are the responsibility of the awardee.
- 8.5.5. {I} An institution must request the Australia Awards Section to provide a 'No Objection Letter' for a further visa when DFAT authorises a variation that permits the awardee to stay in Australia past their initial visa expiry date.
- 8.5.6. {I} The institution should make sure the passport details of the awardees and dependents (if any) are up to date in OASIS to enable DFAT's issuance of a correct 'No Objection Letter'.
- 8.5.7. {S} If the Program Area approves an extension to an awardee's scholarship, the Australia Awards Section will provide a 'No Objection Letter' to allow the Department of Home Affairs to consider an awardee's application for a further student visa.

## 8.6. Two-year exclusion rule

- 8.6.1. It is a condition of the DFAT-sponsored Student visa (subclass 500) that awardees do not remain in Australia, or apply to return to Australia, for anything other than short-term visits, for a minimum period of two years following completion or termination of the scholarship, unless DFAT supports the return.
- 8.6.2. The calculation of the two-year exclusion period is cumulative and any time spent in Australia during the two-year period will be added to the exclusion period.
- 8.6.3. {A} An awardee must gain support from the Australia Awards Section if seeking to return to Australia for a period longer than three months within the two-year exclusion period.
- 8.6.4. {A} An awardee must seek support from the Program Area in their country when applying for a short-term visit up to three months within the two-year exclusion period.
- 8.6.5. {P} Program Areas will provide an awardee with a 'No Objection Letter' if Program Areas support the awardee's short-term visit to Australia within the two-year exclusion period.

## 8.7. Early completion of the scholarship

- 8.7.1. When studies are completed ahead of schedule, DFAT will discontinue financial support for the awardee. This will affect one of the conditions of the Student visa (subclass 500).
- 8.7.2. {I} An institution must advise the Australia Awards Section of a revised scholarship end date through OASIS
- 8.7.3. {I} An institution must advise the awardee that their completion travel to depart Australia must be booked within 30 days of their scholarship end date.
- 8.7.4. {S} The Australia Awards Section will advise the Department of Home Affairs that it has withdrawn support for the awardee's visa from 30 days after the end date of the awardee's Australia Awards Scholarship.

## 8.8. Post-scholarship externally funded program in Australia

- 8.8.1. Awardees may be permitted to pursue further studies or research in Australia to enhance the contribution they are likely to make to their home country's development, and also to further their links with Australia.
- 8.8.2. Awardees who receive an offer of a fully funded PhD scholarship or post-doctoral fellowship for anything other than an Australia Award (including Australia Awards Scholarships and Short-Courses) may seek support from the Australia Awards Section to return temporarily to Australia within the two-year exclusion period.
- 8.8.3. The study program or research activity must be clearly linked to development priorities and have demonstrated application to the awardee's home country.
- 8.8.4. Applications to undertake a second PhD will not be considered.
- 8.8.5. As the two-year exclusion rule is a condition of the student visa, it will **not** be waived but will be **deferred** to commence once the awardee has completed the externally funded program. Any time an awardee spends in their home country before taking up the externally funded program will be deducted from the two-year timeframe. Any time an awardee spends in their home country while undertaking the externally funded program (for example, while conducting fieldwork) is not deducted from the two-year timeframe.
- 8.8.6. A DFAT-funded airfare to return home will not be available to awardees that remain in Australia on an externally funded program.
- 8.8.7. If the partner of a post-scholarship awardee was also an Australia Awards awardee and has returned home upon completion of their scholarship, they will be unable to return to Australia until they have completed their two-year exclusion period. In such cases, the former

awardee will be able to return on a short-term visa only as per [Section 8.6.4](#).

- 8.8.8. {A} An awardee must request in writing for a 'No Objection Letter' from the Australia Awards Section to apply for a visa to return to Australia to undertake an externally funded program, if it is within the two-year exclusion period. This request should include:
- i. the original offer of a fully funded (including daily living allowance) PhD scholarship or post-doctoral fellowship for research/study. If the funding institution is different to the institution offering the study, then a letter of offer from both institutions must be submitted, demonstrating the proposed start date of study and full funding;
  - ii. support letter from academic supervisor;
  - iii. a statement justifying the additional activity (i.e. the PhD program or the Post-doctoral Fellowship) based on relevance to the home country's development priorities;
  - iv. a support letter from the employer as 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 and forge research links that will benefit Australia and the home country; and
  - v. a copy of the current passport with at least six months validity remaining.
- 8.8.9. {A} At least 30 days is required for the request to be considered and for DFAT to consult with partner governments DFAT will not support awardees remaining in Australia pending a decision on approval for an upgrade.
- 8.8.10. {A} Awardees must not remain in Australia beyond their final departure date (refer [Section 17.3](#)) while awaiting for DFAT approval for the post-externally funded program.
- 8.8.11. {S} The Australia Awards Section in consultation with Program Areas and the partner government if applicable, will consider the request from the awardee to return to Australia within the two-year exclusion period.
- 8.8.12. {S} If the delegate approves the request, the awardee will be required to sign and return a deed of amendment to their initial contract with the Commonwealth of Australia to confirm their intention to return to their home country for the remainder of the two-year exclusion period.
- 8.8.13. {S} When DFAT receives the signed deed of amendment, it will provide the awardee with a 'No Objection Letter' to attach to their visa application.

## 8.9. Debt to the Commonwealth

- 8.9.1. Awardees will incur a debt to the Commonwealth if they apply for a visa to remain in Australia longer 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 at the time any such visa application is made.
- 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 or visa administration) unless the awardee provides written consent for DFAT to do so.
- 8.9.3. {S} The Australia Awards Section 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 'No Objection Letter' to the awardee to accompany their visa application.
- 8.9.4. {S} 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, the Australia Awards Section will advise the Department of Home Affairs that it does not support the awardee's visa application.
- 8.9.5. {A} The awardee must advise DFAT 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.
- 8.9.6. {A} Awardees remaining in Australia without DFAT support will be reported to the Department of Home Affairs.
- 8.9.7. {A} If an awardee with a debt stops making repayments, DFAT will notify the Department of Home Affairs and may take legal action.
- 8.9.8. DFAT does not have authority under the Australian Government's Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 to waive a debt to the Commonwealth. Only the Minister for Finance can make these decisions under the Act. Guidance on how to apply for a waiver can be found at <https://www.finance.gov.au/individuals/act-grace-payments-waiver-debts-commonwealth-compensation-detriment-caused-defective-administration-cdda/waiver-debt>.

## 9. Disability inclusive support

### 9.1. Support for people with disability

- 9.1.1. The Australian aid program has specific strategic goals relating to participation in society by people with disability. [DFAT's Development for All 2015-2020](#) 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 reflected in Australia Awards Scholarships, which take a person-centred approach to providing disability inclusive support. 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. All applicants, regardless of ability are to be assessed equally, without discrimination.
- 9.1.4. All applicants and awardees with disability are to be supported to enable their participation in the Australia Awards on an equal basis with all other applicants and awardees.
- 9.1.5. 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 in Australia is available on DFAT's website and 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 Award. They will be considered equally, on merit, against all other applicants.
- 9.2.2. {A} DFAT strongly recommends that applicants with disability:
  - i. disclose their disability when lodging an application; and
  - ii. communicate to Program Areas any adjustments or assistance they will need to attend and participate before attending a selection interview.
- 9.2.3. {P} Program Areas will:
  - i. encourage people with disability, who are otherwise eligible for an Australia Award, to apply;

- ii. ensure applicants with disability are equally able to access 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; and
  - iv. may consult with the DFAT Disability Support Consultant (in Canberra) for expert advice on specific requirements.
- 9.2.4. All applicants for an Australia Awards 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 Scholarships for people with disability. However, in some very rare cases, applicants may not be awarded a scholarship if the disability support required to enable their participation would impose an unjustifiable burden on the Australia Awards Scholarships program.
- 9.2.6. In order to ensure the success of applicants and awardees with disability, DFAT engages a Disability Support Consultant. This adviser assists DFAT in developing a Disability Support Agreement in consultation with institutions, awardees and Program Areas to assess support needs and identify practical solutions to enable the successful selection and mobilisation of applicants and awardees with disability.

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

- 9.3.1. DFAT will provide a Disability Administration Supplement of A\$300 per awardee, per semester to institutions. This acknowledges the additional support Student Contact Officers provide to awardees with disability compared to usual services provided to Australia Awards students.
- 9.3.2. Additional disability support includes implementation and ongoing management of the Disability Support Agreement, which includes financial management of funding provided by DFAT, the purchase and provision of DSA items, correct use of OASIS and, as required, sourcing accessible accommodation, additional welfare and critical incident assistance, support related to carers, etc.
- 9.3.3. This supplement only applies where institutions are managing awardees with active Disability Support Agreements; it will not be approved for an awardee with disability who has no Disability Support Agreement in place, i.e. has no requirement for DFAT funded reasonable accommodations to participate equally in their scholarships

- 9.3.4. The Disability Administration Supplement must form part of a DSA and is to be expensed in line with the Management Fee terms and conditions.
- 9.3.5. DFAT and institutions will provide reasonable adjustment and accommodation to allow awardees with disability to participate in Australia Awards Scholarships on an equal academic basis.
- 9.3.6. DFAT aims to enable awardees to develop disability management skills, greater independence and personal empowerment. These life-long skills assist awardees in Australia and beyond, increasing the awardee's individual development impact.
- 9.3.7. Disability Support Agreements outline reasonable accommodations funded by DFAT. The capacity to provide reasonable accommodations is limited by an awardee's willingness to engage in the disability support process and disclosure of their needs and expectations.
- 9.3.8. Without exception, awardees with a disability will not be approved for mobilisation until a Disability Support Agreement is uploaded to OASIS. Program Areas will be required to defer an awardee if a Disability Support Agreement has not been developed, approved and uploaded to OASIS.
- 9.3.9. DFAT remains flexible in the provision of reasonable accommodations and will reassess support needs throughout the scholarship period.
- 9.3.10. Standard scholarship entitlements, such as contribution to living expenses and supplementary academic support, must not be used to fund disability support. Additional funds for disability support will be allocated as part of the Disability Support Agreement.
- 9.3.11. The Disability Support Agreement acts as an addendum to an awardee's scholarship contract and does not change any of the obligations pursuant to the scholarship contract.

## 9.4. Assessing disability support needs

- 9.4.1. The disability assessment process, in which all stakeholders are engaged, identifies reasonable accommodations and related disability support required to develop a Disability Support Agreement. The costs of implementing a disability support agreement will not exceed 1.5 times the cost of the academic component of the scholarship.
- 9.4.2. Disability Support Agreements will outline the required level of support for pre-departure, during travel and for living and studying in Australia.
- 9.4.3. The Disability Support Consultant will develop the Disability Support Agreement and submit it to Australia Awards Section for review and approval.



## Disability support process responsibilities

9.4.4. All parties must work closely to ensure the best outcome for awardees with disability.

9.4.5. {A} Awardees with disability will:

- i. engage with the Disability Support Consultant as early as possible in the process and while on scholarship work closely with the Disability Support Consultant. This consultant has been engaged by DFAT to provide expertise on the support of awardees with disability;
- ii. participate in the Disability Support Process by completing the Disability Support Statement and providing all relevant medical documents, which will result in a Disability Support Agreement;
- iii. note that the process of conducting Disability Support Processes 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;
- iv. provide a full medical report (no more than two years old and in English, or a certified translation) that establishes the nature of the disability and required support in Australia. This is a requirement to assess the need for reasonable adjustments and accommodations and to ensure awardees with disability have adequate Overseas Student Health Cover;
- v. understand that developing Disability Support Agreements may take considerable time and their cooperation is essential to the efficient and effective implementation of reasonable adjustments and accommodations;
- vi. understand that without a Disability Support Agreement in place DFAT will be required to defer awardees with disability to a later scholarship start date. This is to ensure all necessary and appropriate reasonable adjustments and accommodations can be put in place;
- vii. understand a Disability Support Agreement can be reviewed at any stage of the scholarship;
- viii. where a carer is required, work with the Disability Support Consultant to develop a carers agreement and have the carer sign the agreement; and
- ix. contact the Disability Support Consultant with any concerns regarding disability support while on-scholarship.



9.4.6. {P} Program Areas will:

- i. facilitate the removal of barriers for applicants with disability during the selection process;
- ii. apply fair and transparent practices when considering applications from people with disability and assess applications equally against all other applicants, without discrimination;
- iii. contact successful awardees with disability and explain the Disability Support Process, ensuring they understand their obligations to provide recent and relevant information about their disability and the support they may need in Australia;
- iv. provide all documents and contact information of awardees with disability to the Disability Support Consultant, so a Disability Support Agreement can be developed. If needed, Program Areas should utilise the expertise of the Australia Awards Disability Support Consultant and are not to engage a separate consultant;
- v. understand that development of Disability Support Agreements may take considerable time and all required information must be provided to the Disability Support Consultant at least four months before Semester 1 commencement dates;
- vi. manage awardee with disability expectations around timeframes, their commencement date and ensure they understand they may need to defer if a Disability Support Agreement has not been finalised in time for Semester 1 commencement dates;
- vii. enable awardees to provide and/or acquire a medical report (less than two years old and in English, or a certified translation) that establishes the nature of the disability and fully discloses any pre-existing conditions. These documents must be uploaded to OASIS as soon as received;
- viii. ensure awardees with disability meet the placement requirements of their chosen institution and advise institutions they are seeking placement of an awardee with disability as soon as the disability is disclosed;
- ix. enable Student Contact Officers consult with the Disability Support Consultant to arrange necessary support;
- x. 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 and accommodations required and who will provide them;
- xi. Program Areas will be required to defer awardees with disability to a later scholarship commencement date if a Disability Support Agreement has not been finalised and uploaded to OASIS

- xii. assist awardees with disability, and carers, with visa application requirements including, but not limited to, meeting the costs of obtaining medical reports if required and liaising with Home Affairs on visa matters;
- xiii. provide additional pre-mobilisation assistance, for example during placement help awardees with disability select a suitable institution;
- xiv. seek awardee's with disability agreement (signature) to Disability Support Agreements and upload finalised agreement to OASIS, and, where needed, arrange for Carers agreements to be put in place;
- xv. review disability entitlement variations, submitted by Canberra, and approve in line with the *PGPA Act 2013* and delegated financial responsibilities;
- xvi. ensure all aspects of OASIS are updated with travel details, awardee and carer details, and any other relevant information required by institutions, or the Disability Support Consultant. To ensure collaborative work utilise OASIS Journal Notes to add relevant information;
- xvii. submit mobilisation request for all awardee's with disability to DFAT Canberra for mobilisation approval; and
- xviii. manage the expenditure of Disability Support Agreement items that cannot be expensed through OASIS (carer CLE, etc.).

9.4.7. {S} The Disability Support Consultant will:

- i. work closely with awardees with disability, Program Areas, institutions, and Canberra to ensure all related support for awardees with disability is inclusive, adheres to Australia legislation and ensures equal participation in the scholarship;
- ii. develop Disability Support Agreements for all awardees with disability to be signed by DFAT, the awardee and any relevant third parties;
- iii. hold discussions with the institution Student Contact Officer and disability unit as part of the Disability Support Process. Discussions should cover any additional assistance that an awardee with disability may require for living and studying in Australia and before they arrive on-campus;
- iv. confirm that the institution can provide relevant reasonable academic adjustments for the awardee with disability prior to mobilisation;

- v. recommend an alternative institution where an institution is not able to provide the necessary assistance for an awardee with disability;
- vi. make contact with awardees with disability before the end of first study period (semester or trimester) to discuss the level of support they are experiencing and address any problems that may have arisen;
- vii. provide ongoing support and advice to Canberra, Program Areas, and Student Contact Officers around disability inclusive support as requested throughout the scholarship; and
- viii. develop Disability Support Carer agreements to be agreed between the awardee and their carer.

9.4.8. {S} The Australia Awards Section will:

- i. provide advice for all Program Areas, institutions and the Disability Support Consultant on the application of DFAT policy on Disability Support in the Australia Awards program, including during the Disability Support Process, the mobilisation, on-award and reintegration stages for awardees with disability;
- ii. manage the approval process for all Disability Support Agreements, including Amendments, and ensure entitlement variations are entered into OASIS for Program Area action;
- iii. manage the mobilisation approval process for all awardees with disability, to ensure all aspects of their disability support in Australia have been considered and all relevant information has been uploaded into OASIS, prior to mobilisation; and
- iv. provide training in OASIS to ensure accurate financial management of Disability Support Agreement items.

9.4.9. {I} Institutions will:

- i. implement approved Disability Support Agreements to ensure non-academic reasonable accommodations are in place as soon as practicable or upon the awardee with disability's arrival;
- ii. adhere to Australian legislation regarding disability support and reasonable adjustments related to academic support;
- iii. refer the awardee with disability to the institution Disability Unit during the first week of IAP or prior to IAP commencement in cases where the awardee is provided with an early mobilisation;
- iv. be responsible for financially managing the Disability Support Agreement prescribed items in line with institution financial systems, including the purchase, provision and ongoing management of support provided by DFAT;

- v. regularly connect with the awardee with disability;
- vi. seek awardee with disability agreement (signature) for any approved amendments to Disability Support Agreements;
- vii. financially manage the Disability Support Agreement amendments, including the purchase, provision and ongoing management of support provided by DFAT; and
- viii. enter Disability Administrative Supplement entitlement variations for awardees with disability who have active Disability Support Agreements in place. This Supplement is not eligible to be paid for an awardee with disability who has no disability support requirements in place. It can only be expensed in line with the terms and conditions associated with the Management Fee.

## 9.5. Reasonable adjustments and accommodations

- 9.5.1. The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 requires education to be provided in a non-discriminatory way to all students studying in Australia (regardless of nationality). The Disability Standards for Education 2005 require reasonable adjustments to be made to enable this non-discriminatory participation.
- 9.5.2. For the purposes of this document, DFAT makes a clear distinction between reasonable adjustments and reasonable accommodations.
- 9.5.3. 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.
- 9.5.4. Neither the Act nor the Standards require reasonable adjustments to be made if this would impose an unjustifiable hardship on a person or organisation (all factors are considered, including impact on the student, or institution, etc.).
- 9.5.5. To ensure the participation of awardees with a disability, DFAT offers non-academic reasonable accommodations, which complement the legislated reasonable adjustments partner institutions are obligated to provide.
- 9.5.6. Reasonable accommodation is the provision of support, modifications and/or adjustments that meet the individual needs of people with disabilities to ensure they enjoy and exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis to others. Reasonable accommodation can include the provision of accessible transportation,

sign-language interpreters, accessible meeting venues, and documents in accessible formats.

9.5.7. Reasonable accommodations are assessed on the same basis and at the same time as reasonable adjustments through the Disability Assessment Process.

9.5.8. {A} 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 must provide materials in an awardee's preferred format.

### **Responsibilities for reasonable adjustments and accommodations**

9.5.9. Institutions have an obligation to provide awardees with reasonable adjustments to support their academic endeavours.

9.5.10. DFAT provides non-academic reasonable accommodations. See below for clarification of the responsibilities of institutions and DFAT.

### **Reasonable adjustments**

9.5.11. {I} Institutions are required to consult with awardees with disability about their support and access needs to determine what reasonable adjustments are appropriate and necessary.

9.5.12. {I} 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 lectures and tutors;
- iv. advice about where to sit 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 where deemed necessary by the institution;
- viii. alternative exam and assessment formats;
- ix. accessible parking;

- x. disability advocacy and support; and
- 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).

## Reasonable accommodations

- 9.5.13. {P} DFAT provides non-academic reasonable accommodations and inclusive support for awardees with disability as required. Non-academic reasonable accommodations will be based on the needs identified by DFAT through an awardee's disability assessment and may include:
- i. accessible interviews;
  - ii. accessible pre-departure materials, procedures and programs, and support to attend pre-departure events where required;
  - iii. assistance to select an institution and work with that institution to access academic reasonable adjustments;
  - iv. assistance to find and access accessible housing;
  - v. alternative transport arrangements to and from Australia and in Australia;
  - vi. support for full-time, part-time or non-ongoing carers;
  - vii. funds for equipment that is essential to the successful completion of an awardee's scholarship;
  - viii. additional funds for Overseas Student Health Cover; and
  - ix. limited access to additional medical support and allied health care.
- 9.5.14. The Australia Awards Section assists Program Areas, managing contractors and institutions by engaging a Disability Support Consultant who collaborates with all areas, including awardees, to developing Disability Support Agreements, which ensure ongoing disability support throughout the life of the scholarship.
- 9.5.15. Access to disability support funding ends five days after the completion of the scholarship, in line with CLE entitlement.

## 9.6. Carers

- 9.6.1. DFAT provides financial support for the care of awardees with disability however, the provision of any care arrangements will be determined by the Disability Support Consultant, in consultation with the awardee and Program Area.
- 9.6.2. When assessing the need for a carer, the Disability Support Consultant will take into consideration existing care requirements and the

technology and support services available in Australia, which may allow an awardee to develop new disability management skills and live more independently.

- 9.6.3. {A} Awardees must assist in identifying a person to provide care. Where possible the best person to provide care in Australia is the person that provides care in their home country. The carer identified must be able to provide care in an Australia context.
- 9.6.4. {A} Carers must be aware of the support provided by DFAT and agree to their role as carer by signing a Disability Support Carers Agreement.
- 9.6.5. {A} Any funds provided by DFAT to support the carer are to be used for that function, in full knowledge of the carer.
- 9.6.6. A carer must meet the following criteria:
- i. be aged 18 or over prior to mobilisation;
  - ii. not be a current Australia Awards scholarship awardee;
  - iii. be able to speak a basic level of English (Program Areas may provide some English language training prior to mobilisation);
  - iv. be physically able to undertake the caring duties;
  - v. be available for the required scholarship duration; and
  - vi. meet the visa requirements
- 9.6.7. Where the spouse (de jure or de facto) of an awardee with a disability is an awardee's carer, they must apply for a Student visa (subclass 500) as a dependant. Where an awardee's carer is not their spouse, the carer should apply for a Subclass 590 visa.
- 9.6.8. Student Guardian visa (subclass 590) applicants must provide evidence of their carer responsibilities in Australia to the Department of Home Affairs. Either a Disability Support Agreement from DFAT outlining their caring role in Australia or a 'DFAT Carer Requirement Statement', provided by Program Area, is sufficient. See the [Home Affairs website](#) for more information.
- 9.6.9. DFAT will fully fund any visa costs associated with a Student Guardian visa (subclass 590).
- 9.6.10. A Student Guardian visa (subclass 590) does not generally provide working rights. In addition, DFAT holds the expectation a full-time carer will not seek additional work while in Australia.
- 9.6.11. {I} Institutions must organise OSHC cover for carers on dependant 500 visas. These carers can be added to the awardee's OSHC cover and must have health insurance for the entire period they are in Australia.
- 9.6.12. {P} Program Areas must organise Overseas Visitor Health Cover for carers who are on Student Guardian (subclass 590) visas. 590 visa

holders must have health insurance for the entire period they are in Australia.

9.6.13. {A} Should an awardee choose to change carers during their scholarship period they are liable for all costs involved in mobilising their new carer. This may include airfares, health cover, any changes to accommodation requirements, including rental increases. Any changes to carer must be discussed with the Student Contact Officer and Disability Support Consultant prior to any action taken.

9.6.14. Carer Support Packages must form part of the Disability Support Agreement. DFAT will fund the following carer support package:

**Table 1: Carer Support Package**

Entitlement	Description	Amount
Contribution to Living Expenses	An allowance to subsidise living costs while in Australia	A\$30,003 per year, pro rata. <i>Under Australian law, the Contribution to Living Expenses for Carers may be subject to tax. Carers should seek independent advice on their individual taxation liability.</i>
Airfares – mobilisation and completion travel	Flights, to and from Australia, at the beginning and end of the scholarship period	Fully funded - <i>in line with awardee entitlements</i>
COVID-19 related medical tests and quarantine costs – mobilisation and completion travel	COVID-19 related medical tests and quarantine costs to and from Australia, at the beginning and end of the scholarship period.	Fully funded - <i>in line with awardee entitlements</i>
Reunion fares	<u>Only applicable in some cases</u> – return reunion fares. See clause 9.7.3 for reference.	Fully funded - <i>in line with awardee entitlements</i>
Visa	All costs associated with gaining the most relevant visa	Fully funded
Health Care	Costs for either Overseas Health Cover (dependant 500), or Overseas Visitor Health Cover (Guardian 590) while in Australia	Fully funded

9.6.15. There are different levels of care that may be recommended for an awardee with disability.



**Table 2: Carer Options**

Care Options	Description
Settling-in Carer	<p>Provided to awardees who do not require on-going assistance but would benefit from help establishing themselves in their new environment.</p> <p>A Settling-in Carer package can be prescribed up to three months only. Extensions of the settling-in carer packages should not be expected.</p> <p>Any change to a Settling-in Carer package will only be considered through a formal recommendation from the Disability Support Consultant.</p> <p>This can be prescribed at a full-time or part-time level.</p> <p>Full Carer package - pro rata</p>
Full-time Carer – from country of origin	Provided to awardees with high-level disability support needs to participate fully in academic studies and life in Australia.
Part-time Carer – from country of origin	Provided to awardees with lower-level disability support needs to participate fully in academic studies and life in Australia, on a part – time basis.
Part-time Carer – Australian Care	Provided to an awardee who would benefit from the assistance of a carer for only a few hours each week. Funds will be allocated in accordance with the standards set by <a href="#">National Disability Insurance Scheme</a> .

### 9.7. Reunion airfares for awardees with carers

- 9.7.1. Reunion entitlements for awardees with a disability do not differ from the entitlement for awardees without disability. See Section 10.8 for further information.
- 9.7.2. Where an awardee is accompanied in Australia by a carer on dependant Student visa (subclass 500) they are considered accompanied and neither awardee nor carer is entitled to a reunion airfare.
- 9.7.3. Where an awardee is accompanied in Australia by a carer on a Guardian Visa (subclass 590), both awardee and carer will be entitled to a reunion airfare. In these cases, both reunion fares must be taken at the same time and both are funded by DFAT.
- 9.7.4. Should a carer on a Guardian Visa (590) be a spouse (de jure or de facto) neither party are entitled to reunion flights.
- 9.7.5. Carer reunions fares, if applicable, must form part of the Disability Support Agreement.

## 9.8. Assistive Devices and Mobility Equipment

- 9.8.1. Awardees with a disability may require assistive devices or mobility equipment to ensure equal participation in academic studies and life in Australia.
- 9.8.2. Disability Support Agreements prescribe funding for all required devices or equipment to be managed by institutions and in accordance with recommendations by relevant allied professionals in Australia.
- 9.8.3. In implementing the Disability Support Agreement, institutions must organise the purchase and provision of devices and equipment as a priority. This includes the financial management of Disability Support funds provided by DFAT.
  - i. Funding cannot be transferred between items.
  - ii. Funding must only be expensed up to the required limit only and upon recommendation from allied professionals and or/the Disability Support Agreement.
  - iii. Unused funding is not available for any other use.
  - iv. Should sufficient funding not be available in a specified item an entitlement variation may be raised. This ensures small changes do not result in burdensome administration and can only occur with approval from the Disability Support Consultant in writing.
- 9.8.4. Institutions must manage the expectations of awardees with disability regarding the purchasing of assistive devices or mobility equipment. Purchasing devices or equipment at or near the end of the scholarship period is not optional.
- 9.8.5. Awardees become the owner of devices or equipment purchased by DFAT and are responsible for all costs associated with maintenance or repair of equipment and devices.
- 9.8.6. DFAT acknowledges the cost of maintenance for manual wheelchairs, powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters can be high; as such, awardees with these devices are eligible to claim maintenance assistance, up to A\$1500. This entitlement must form part of the Disability Support Agreement.
- 9.8.7. Awardees should consider purchasing insurance for assistive devices and equipment. This cannot be covered under the maintenance entitlement and is at the awardee's own cost.
- 9.8.8. In the case of institution transfers, support for the transport of assistive devices and mobility equipment may be provided. Student Contact Officers and awardee must contact the Disability Support Consultant to review and provide recommendation to DFAT on this matter.

- 9.8.9. DFAT will provide funding to cover additional baggage and freight costs, up to A\$1000, where these costs are associated with awardees transporting assistive devices and mobility equipment to and from Australia. These freight charges must form part of the Disability Support Agreement.
- 9.8.10. If an awardee chooses not to take equipment or devices home at the end of their scholarship it is their responsibility to dispose of the item.

## 9.9. Additional support to ensure success

- 9.9.1. To ensure the success of awardees with disability there are several areas of additional support available as needed. If accessed these must form part of the Disability Support Agreement.
- 9.9.2. The Disability Support Consultant must be part of reviewing the support process.

**Table 3: Additional Support Available**

AdditionalSupport	Description
Pre-departure Support {P}	<p>Additional support may be required to ensure an awardee with disability can participate equally in all pre-departure programs and activities. This support may cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accessible accommodation</li> <li>• additional support for an accompanying carer</li> <li>• different travel arrangements</li> <li>• presentation material in alternative formats</li> <li>• purchase of adaptive technology, as approved by the Disability Support Consultant, for use during pre-departure training where this equipment is also required for use in Australia to support in course participation.</li> </ul> <p>Program Areas should discuss options with the awardee about how they would like to be included in the first instance; following these conversations they are able to contact AWB and the Disability Support Consultant for advice.</p>

Additional Support	Description
<p>On-Campus Accessible Accommodation Rental Assistance {I} {P}</p>	<p>Awardees with disability are required to cover the cost of their own accommodation in Australia, however given accessible accommodation on campus can be of limited supply with higher rents, DFAT may provide rental assistance.</p> <p>Rental Assistance only covers the difference between actual rental cost and the average rental cost of the city where the awardee is living.</p> <p>This assistance is applicable to carer's rent when the carer is required to live in separate accommodation.</p> <p>This assistance is applicable to temporary accommodation.</p>
<p>Participation Assistance {I}</p>	<p>Assessed on an individual basis by the Disability Support Consultant this support provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility training and orientation</li> <li>• Independent living training</li> <li>• Technology and software training</li> <li>• In-class support</li> </ul> <p>This training must be provided an individual contracted by the institution and cannot be another Australia Awards recipient.</p> <p>A\$500 per semester, first year of scholarship only.</p>
<p>Early Mobilisation {P}</p>	<p>Early mobilisation is available for high-level disability support awardees to facilitate training in necessary disability management skills, or the use of disability specific technology and devices.</p> <p>This support is only available to high-level disability support awardees only, up to a maximum of 21 days for non-academic learning.</p> <p>CLE is payable for this period.</p>
<p>Reduction in first semester study load {I} {P}</p>	<p>High-level disability support awardees may be offered the option of part-time study in their first semester. This ensures their ability to integrate fully into their new accommodation, institution and life in Australia. It also ensures they are able to learn and become proficient in new assistive technology to enable full participation in their scholarship opportunity.</p> <p>Any extension past the first semester of a part-time study load must be recommended by the Disability Support Consultant, supported by the Institution and approved by Program Areas.</p> <p>This support is only available to high-level disability support awardees.</p>

Additional Support	Description
Transport Allowance	<p>This support is to cover costs where limited accessible public transport is available, as it promotes and assists with independent living.</p> <p>Assessed on an individual basis by the Disability Support Consultant and only available to high-level disability support awardees. This support is only available to high-level disability support awardees.</p>

## 9.10. Out of Scope

9.10.1. The intention of DFAT support is to remove barriers to education and promote independent living skills. The Australia Awards Scholarships is not a medical program. Disability Support funding is not intended to treat a person's disability. The following items are not supported under a Disability Support Agreement:

- Cochlear implants
- Medical interventions
- Medications
- Physiotherapy sessions
- Management of ongoing health problems.
- Speech pathologist sessions to fix a stutter
- Prescription glasses
- Prosthesis
- The purchase of a motor vehicle
- Exercise activities, gym memberships, pool fees, etc.

9.10.2. DFAT expect all Australia Awards Scholarship recipients, regardless of disability status, to self-manage and self-fund their health care while on-scholarship. DFAT does not fund medical treatment in Australia.

9.10.3. In the case of secondary impairments caused by new or pre-existing medical conditions, the Disability Support Consultant may recommend limited reasonable accommodations, where that support is essential to enable participation.

9.10.4. DFAT will not fund surgery or other major medical treatment as a reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodations may only be to enable or continue an awardee's academic participation, and be within reasonable limits of disability support, including cost limitations at Section 9.4.1.

### Health Conditions

9.10.5. The Australia Awards Scholarships program draws a distinction between people with disability and people who are experiencing health issues. This distinction takes into consideration the overall aims

of the Australia Awards Scholarships program and the ability of an individual to successfully complete a scholarship.

- 9.10.6. Where an applicant or awardee is unable to study due to an illness, they will not generally qualify for disability support. Each case is considered on an individual basis.
- 9.10.7. Awardees with pre-existing conditions are advised to research their needs and determine what support is available in Australia or from their home country to support them while they are on scholarship. It will be the responsibility of the awardee to meet any health costs not covered by the Overseas Student Health Cover.
- 9.10.8. Experience demonstrates that awardees experience heightened stress from undertaking a scholarship in Australia (a foreign country) in a second language, with a different culture and a stringent academic regime. Awardees should be aware that underlying or dormant medical conditions are often revived by such stresses and should arrive prepared to deal with them.

### **Elective medical treatment**

- 9.10.9. DFAT will not provide funding for elective medical treatment to address an impairment.
- 9.10.10. If an awardee seeks treatment of this sort, they are liable for all costs associated with the treatment.
- 9.10.11. DFAT has an expectation all awardees will prioritise their studies and organise any optional medical treatment at times that do not negatively impact on their participation in their course (i.e. over semester breaks). See clause 14.6.4 for further information.
- 9.10.12. Program Areas and the Disability Support Consultant must ensure awardees with disability understand what is out of scope and ensure awardee expectations are managed appropriately.
- 9.10.13. {P} Program Areas and the Disability Support Consultant must ensure awardees with disability understand what is out of scope and manage awardee expectations.

### **Medication**

- 9.10.14. DFAT does not provide funding for ongoing medication for any Australia Awards recipient regardless of disability status. This includes medication for short-term or ongoing conditions.
- 9.10.15. All awardees are encouraged to bring their own medication from home. Awardees must ensure they are compliant with Australia laws when bringing prescription medication into Australia. See the [Home Affairs website](#) for more information.
- 9.10.16. All awardees are encouraged to bring their own medical appliances from home and to have an adequate supply chain to support them

throughout their scholarship. Where disposable items are required for an appliance, awardees are to ensure they can source those disposables from their home country or find compatible disposables in Australia. DFAT does not fund disposables.

- 9.10.17. DFAT does not provide funding for awardees to purchase medication in their home country.
- 9.10.18. If an awardee chooses not to bring their medication from home, and instead seeks a new/different medication in Australia, they should first discuss this with their doctor, and mitigate any risk for adverse side effects or reactions that may have the potential to affect the awardee's participation in and successful completion of their scholarship.
- 9.10.19. If an awardee is unable to study for a period of 6 weeks or more including due to the impact of a new medication, they will be required to suspend their Scholarship and return home to recover.

## 10. Scholarship fees and entitlements

### 10.1. Summary of scholarship costs

- 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. {I} 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 Australia Awards Section or Program Areas as appropriate (see [Chapter 13](#)).

**Table 1: Summary of scholarship costs**

Scholarship cost	Method of payment	Description
Academic Fees	Paid by Australia Awards Section directly to the institution	Covers the course costs and all compulsory academic fees that apply to international students.
Mobilisation travel	Booked and paid for by Program Areas on behalf of the awardee	Payment of a single economy class airfare to Australia from the home country via the most direct and economical route at the commencement of the scholarship. See <a href="#">Section 10.9</a>
Visa expenses	Paid by Program Areas on behalf of the awardee	Payment of visa processing and medical checks necessary for gaining the Student visa (subclass 500).
Introductory Academic Program (IAP)	Paid by the Australia Awards Section directly to the institution	The 4-6 week Introductory Academic Program is provided by the institution for awardees when they arrive in Australia. The IAP is compulsory for all awardees. Failure to attend the Introductory Academic Program may result in the awardee forfeiting their scholarship. See <a href="#">Section 12.1</a> .



Scholarship cost	Method of payment	Description
Establishment Allowance	Paid by the Australia Awards Section to the institution to distribute to the awardee	A contribution of A\$5,000 towards expenses such as rental bonds, textbooks, study materials, additional medical insurance, home contents insurance etc. paid by the institution when the awardee arrives in Australia. See <a href="#">Section 10.4</a>
Contribution to Living Expenses (also referred to as a Stipend)	Paid by the Australia Awards Section to the institution to distribute to the awardee	A fortnightly Contribution to Living Expenses (CLE) paid at a rate determined by DFAT. From 1 January 2013, the CLE rate is A\$82.20 per day (or approximately A\$30,000 per annum). In a leap year the CLE for a scholarship will be: $366 * A\$82.20 = A\$30,085.20$ In a non-leap year, the CLE for a scholarship will be: $365 * A\$82.20 = A\$30,003.00$ See <a href="#">Section 10.5</a>
Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)	Paid by the Australia Awards Section to the institution to then arrange and pay for on behalf of the awardee	Single OSHC will be provided to cover the DFAT awardee's basic medical costs. Awardees may purchase, at their own expense, additional medical insurance to cover ancillary services such as dentist, optometrist, physiotherapist, etc. See <a href="#">Section 10.6</a>
Supplementary Academic Support	Paid by the Australia Awards Section to the institution to pay for on behalf of the awardee or distribute to the awardee	This is a support service. These funds may be used by the institution, where required to assist an awardee to successfully complete their academic studies. Institutions may expend these funds at a rate of A\$500 every 6 months that the awardee is on-scholarship. These funds are expended by the institution on behalf of the awardee for eligible activities. See <a href="#">Section 12.2</a>
Student Services Amenities Fee	Paid by the Australia Awards Section directly to the institution	Covers the fee payable to institutions for the provision of necessary student services.

Scholarship cost	Method of payment	Description
COVID-19 Response	Paid by the Australia Awards Section directly to the Institution	Covers the costs associated with awardees unable to return home due to border or flight restrictions due to COVID-19. See <a href="#">Section 10.2</a>
Professional Development Courses (Study Enrichment)	Paid by the Australia Awards Section to the institution	Awardees who have completed their scholarship but are unable to return home due to COVID-19 border or flight restrictions are eligible to undertake professional development courses. See <a href="#">Section 10.3</a>
Completion travel	Paid by the Australia Awards Section to the institution to then book and pay for on behalf of the awardee	Payment of a single economy class airfare from Australia to the home country via the most direct and economical route at the completion of the scholarship. See <a href="#">Section 10.11</a>

Scholarship costs subject to requirement and/or eligibility	Method of payment	Description
In-country preparatory programs	Paid by Program Areas	Institutions assess whether awardees are required to undertake preparatory programs before commencing their main course of study. See <a href="#">Section 5.2</a>
In-Australia preparatory programs	Paid by the Australia Awards Section 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 Australia Awards Section 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 10.10</a>

Scholarship costs subject to requirement and/or eligibility	Method of payment	Description
Fieldwork	Paid by the Australia Awards Section to the institution	Awardees undertaking a PhD or Master's by research (or coursework with a compulsory fieldwork component) are eligible for funding for fieldwork travel.  See <a href="#">Section 12.3</a>
Disability Support	Paid by the Australia Awards Section to the institution	Awardees assessed as eligible for Disability Support Arrangement are entitled to individual Reasonable Accommodations provided by DFAT.

## 10.2. COVID-19 Response

- 10.2.1. This entitlement applies to any awardee who has completed their scholarship but is unable to return home due to border and flight restrictions as a result of COVID-19.
- 10.2.2. The entitlement covers additional costs for visa extensions or new visa costs and medical examinations to support visa application.
- 10.2.3. The entitlement can be added when creating an entitlement or extension variation in OASIS. This entitlement will cover costs associated with extending the scholarship due to COVID-19 disruptions such as travel restrictions (either in Australia or the home country of the awardee) and can only be applied to awardees who remain in Australia until travel restrictions have been lifted and they are able to return home. Institutions must ensure that detailed explanations are provided in the comments field for each expense accrued as part of this entitlement.

## 10.3. Professional Development Courses

- 10.3.1 This entitlement applies to awardees who have completed their scholarship but are unable to return home due to border or flight restrictions due to COVID-19.
- 10.3.2 The study enrichment entitlement covers costs associated with awardees undertaking professional development courses.
- 10.3.3 The entitlement variation can be added by recording the professional development course under 'Course Details' by selecting 'Add' and 'Bridging Course' as the course type and 'Non AQF Award' as the level

of study. Courses can be expensed in the usual way and academic progress/completion must also be recorded in OASIS.

#### 10.4. Establishment allowance

- 10.4.1. Awardees are provided with a once-only establishment allowance of A\$5,000 on arrival in Australia. No re-establishment allowance is paid when an awardee transfers between institutions or returns from a period of suspension. Program Areas must enter passport details into OASIS at least three weeks prior to the Recommended Arrival Date to ensure timely provision of the establishment allowance.
- 10.4.2. The allowance is a contribution toward expenses such as rental bonds, textbooks, study materials – including IT equipment, laboratory coats, additional medical insurance and home contents insurance. It is paid in a lump sum for awardees to use at their discretion.
- 10.4.3. {A} Awardees should come prepared with funds (in Australian dollars) to ensure they have enough money to cover any costs that may be incurred before they receive their establishment allowance.
- 10.4.4. {A} Awardees should note that it may take several days for the bank to process the institution's establishment allowance payment.
- 10.4.5. {I} The institution must pay the full establishment allowance into a bank account nominated by the awardee on their arrival in Australia 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, the institution may give students their establishment allowance in cheque format.

#### 10.5. Contribution to living expenses

- 10.5.1. 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.
- 10.5.2. Entitlement to the contribution to living expenses allowance commences on the awardee's date of arrival in Australia, which must be no more than 14 days before commencement of their Introductory Academic Program.
- 10.5.3. The contribution to living expenses ends five days after the completion or termination of the scholarship. The completion of the scholarship varies:
  - i. for awardees undertaking coursework studies, the contribution to living expenses will cease five days after final examination results are released;

- ii. for research awardees, the contribution to living expenses will cease five days after the awardee submits their thesis;
- 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 five days after their departure from Australia. For the purposes of contribution to living expenses calculations, the awardee's departure date therefore becomes the end date of their scholarship; and
- iv. {I} for awardees returning home before the release of their academic results, Student Contact Officers should obtain assurance from the awardee's supervisor that the awardee is likely to achieve a satisfactory result before agreeing to an earlier departure.

10.5.4. Contribution to living expenses payments continue:

- i. during public holidays and semester breaks.
- ii. during periods of fieldwork 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.

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

- i. during periods of scholarship suspension.
- ii. where an awardee is detained by Australian or foreign authorities for more than six weeks.

10.5.6. {A} Awardees are responsible for all their expenses in Australia including those of any family members. The contribution to living expenses is currently tax exempt. Awardees should visit the Australian Taxation Office website at [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au) for information on Australian tax laws.

10.5.7. {A} 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 and may result in the termination of their scholarship

10.5.8. {I} The institution must:

- i. pay the contribution to living expenses fortnightly, in arrears, into an Australian bank account 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; and

- iv. advise all awardees of the need to obtain a tax file number for banking purposes and for cases where awardees are seeking employment.

## 10.6.Overseas Student Health Cover

- 10.6.1. {A} Awardees are required to have health insurance, known as Overseas Student Health Cover. It is a mandatory condition of all student visas that the holder maintains this insurance for the duration of their stay in Australia. Entitlement to Overseas Student Health Cover commences on the date of arrival in Australia and ceases on the day an awardee departs from Australia at the end of the scholarship.
- 10.6.2. {A} Overseas Student Health Cover does not cover pre-existing conditions or services such as dental, physiotherapy or optical services (known as ancillary services). A waiting period may apply to some services including those related to pregnancy. Awardees may purchase ancillary cover at their own expense.
- 10.6.3. {A} Awardees are responsible for any costs that are not covered by Overseas Student Health Cover.
- 10.6.4. {A} The institution will purchase Overseas Student Health Cover for an awardee. If an awardee chooses to purchase additional cover from a provider other than the institution's preferred provider, it will be at the awardee's own expense and the awardee must inform the Institution of the change, including providing evidence of the new policy. Awardees are responsible for making and managing any claims under their Overseas Student Health Cover.
- 10.6.5. {A} When an awardee's scholarship is suspended, the Overseas Student Health Cover may also be suspended. Awardees remaining in Australia must obtain and fund their own overseas student health cover to comply with visa requirements.
- 10.6.6. {A} If an awardee completes their scholarship early, and the institution returns the remaining Overseas Student Health Cover premium to DFAT, the awardee is not permitted to claim the refund. Any attempt by the awardee to do so will be considered an act of fraud against the Commonwealth of Australia.
- 10.6.7. {A} Awardees must purchase cover for all family members accompanying them in Australia. It is a requirement of the Student visa (Subclass 500) that dependents have cover for the duration of their stay in Australia. Awardees are responsible for organising and paying for this and any other medical expenses for all family members while they are in Australia.
- 10.6.8. {A} If an awardee is accompanied by their family member in Australia, the awardee may either:

- i. request advice from the institution on how to arrange family cover for the duration of the scholarship from the institution's preferred Overseas Student Health Cover provider. In this case, the institution will only pay for the equivalent of single cover, and the awardee will pay the balance, or
- ii. purchase family cover from a provider other than the institution's preferred provider. In this case the institution is still required to purchase single Overseas Student Health Cover for the awardee for the duration of their stay in Australia. The awardee will be responsible for the entire cost of the family cover.

10.6.9. {A} Families can find further information on Overseas Student Health Cover on the Study in Australia website at <https://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/english/live-in-australia/insurance/Insurance>.

10.6.10. {I} The institution must:

- i. arrange for the enrolment and payment of Overseas Student Health Cover for awardees for the duration of their stay in Australia;
- ii. ensure awardees receive a copy of their cover details including the policy/product disclosure statement;
- iii. ensure the Overseas Student Health Cover is maintained for the length of the scholarship
- iv. request their Overseas Student Health Cover provider refund the institution for payments related to awardees completing their scholarship before the planned completion date; and
- v. ensure Overseas Student Health Cover costs that are refunded by the provider to the institution are then reimbursed to DFAT.

10.6.11. {I} If an awardee is accompanied, the institution must arrange Overseas Student Health Cover in accordance with [Section 10.4.7](#).

10.6.12. {I} If an awardee is accompanied and chooses to purchase family cover from a provider other than the institution's preferred provider, the institution must still purchase single Overseas Student Health Cover for the awardee from the institution's preferred provider for the period of their scholarship. This will be in addition to the awardee's family cover.

10.6.13. {I} When an awardee is on suspension the institution will suspend the Overseas Student Health Cover for the suspension period and reactivate the policy upon the awardee's return to studies. When an awardee completes their scholarship early, the institution will return the remaining Overseas Student Health Cover premium to DFAT. The awardee is not permitted to claim the refund. If the awardee does so it will be considered as an act of fraud against the Commonwealth of

Australia. The fraud will be investigated and may result in a termination of the awardee's scholarship and possible criminal charges.

## 10.7. Visa costs

- 10.7.1. {P} Program Areas will cover the visa processing costs and the initial medical examination(s) undertaken in the awardee's home country to enable the Student visa (subclass 500) to be issued. DFAT will not pay the costs of any additional medical examinations. This includes where an examination is required for re-entry into Australia following a scholarship suspension, or an extension of the scholarship requiring a new visa or passport renewal (refer [Chapter 8](#)).
- 10.7.2. {P} Visa application costs for visa extensions are the responsibility of the awardee.

## 10.8. Conditions that apply to travel

- 10.8.1. The following conditions apply to all travel (i.e. to Australia at the commencement of the scholarship, from Australia upon completion of the scholarship, fieldwork travel and reunion travel):
- i. awardees are entitled to travel (i.e. airfares 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. COVID-19 related medical tests and clearances prior to travel that are required for entry into Australia or awardees home countries;
  - iii. with prior approval, DFAT may also cover the cost of travel (using public transport) between the airport and the awardee's place of residence, either in Australia, or in the awardee's home country, where the distance is greater than 250km. Post will be responsible for approving travel costs for awardees who are in-country. If the awardee is on scholarship the institution will need to submit a variation request in OASIS if additional funding is required;
  - iv. 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;
  - v. Program Areas 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 Program Area or institution;
  - vi. Program Areas 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, unless unavoidable stopovers are not permitted. If unavoidable, DFAT will pay reasonable accommodation costs (including transport to and from



- the airport and accommodation only, though it should be checked first whether these costs are covered by the airline;
- vii. 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; and
- viii. awardees will not be permitted to deviate from these conditions in order to travel with dependants or family members.

10.8.2. The scholarship does not cover costs for:

- i. airfares to a third country that is not the awardee's home country unless it is associated with a compulsory fieldwork trip that is approved by DFAT. Refer to [Section 12.3](#) for Fieldwork travel.
- ii. travel insurance while the awardee is travelling to and from Australia or while studying in Australia (including for loss of possessions);
- iii. travel of awardees' dependents or family members;
- iv. fees, additional taxes or fare differences related to changing travel dates or missing flights;
- v. transporting personal effects or excess baggage to and from Australia, or within Australia; and
- vi. other incidental costs incurred during awardees' travel, including airport transfers not covered by [Section 10.8.1. ii](#).

## 10.9. Mobilisation travel

- 10.9.1. {A} All awardees must contact the Student Contact Officer at their institution prior to leaving their home country to advise the Student Contact Officer of their arrival plans.
- 10.9.2. {A} All Awardees must have a plan for transport from their airport of arrival to their accommodation and must have booked accommodation for at least the first three nights' accommodation on arrival in Australia.
- 10.9.3. {P} The airfare for awardees to travel to Australia is booked and paid for by Program Areas. Program Areas record awardees' travel and arrival details in OASIS, which then notifies institutions of these details.
- 10.9.4. {P} Program Areas are to arrange awardees' mobilisation travel and must:
  - i. ensure awardees arrive on or after the recommended date of arrival as specified in the institution's placement offer. This is to be no more than 14 days before the awardee is scheduled to commence the mandatory Introductory Academic Program or in-Australia preparatory program.

- 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, and by 10 December at the latest for awardees commencing in semester one unless there has been a delay in finalising the placement or issuing a visa
- iii. amend an awardee's travel details as soon as possible in OASIS if their arrival details change.
- iv. confirm that each awardee has communicated their arrival plan to the student contact officer at their university.

10.9.5. {P} If a Program Area does not provide timely and accurate advice to the institution and additional costs are incurred, the institution may pass these onto the Program Area.

10.9.6. {P} Additional costs must be discussed with and approved by the Australia Awards Section. If dependents are mobilising after the awardee, the Program area is responsible for issuing a 'No Objection Letter' for the dependents so they may apply for a visa to accompany the awardee in Australia.

## 10.10. Reunion airfare

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

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

10.10.3. Extension of a scholarship, including an honours year extension, does not entitle an awardee to an additional reunion travel entitlement.

10.10.4. {A} To be eligible for the reunion airfare, awardees must:

- i. be unaccompanied for the duration of the scholarship.
- ii. be unaccompanied in Australia for twelve months
- iii. if family members have at any time accompanied the awardee in Australia as a dependent on their 500 visas, to access reunion the awardee must be unaccompanied for twelve months from the date of dependant/s departure from Australia.
- iv. be enrolled for a minimum of two academic years in Australia (the academic year can include in-Australia preparatory programs).

10.10.5. {A} If an awardee wants to return home at any other time, they may do so at their own expense, but it must not have an adverse effect on their academic progress. Awardees must keep the institution informed of their travel arrangements.

- 10.10.6. {A} Awardees entitled to fieldwork (refer 12.3.6) may not claim a reunion airfare in the year in which they undertake their fieldwork, if the fieldwork location is in their home country.
- 10.10.7. {A} If an awardee decides to bring their family after they have arrived in Australia, they must inform the Student Contact Officer who will process the change in OASIS and contact the Program Area for a 'No Objection Letter'.
- 10.10.8. {A} Where an awardee decides after they arrive in Australia that they wish to have their family accompany them, they must forfeit their reunion airfare entitlement by signing the form at [Appendix A](#).
- 10.10.9. {A} If an awardee is found to have accessed reunion airfare (s) while their immediate family (dependants) are living with them in Australia, this will be investigated for fraud which may result in a termination of the awardee's scholarship and possible criminal charges. Please refer to Glossary for a definition of dependant.
- 10.10.10. The number of reunion airfare entitlements varies depending on the duration of the scholarship. The table on the next page shows when the entitlement may be claimed.
- 10.10.11. 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.
- 10.10.12. Reunion airfares do not accrue and must be used by the end of each eligible academic year.
- 10.10.13. If an awardee commences in January, the reunion travel must be taken at the end of the first academic year.
- If an awardee commences mid-year the travel can be deferred to the Christmas break ***in the following year***. For example, an awardee who commences in July 2018 on a two-year program is eligible to travel back home in July 2019. However, the awardee can choose to defer his/her travel and fly home for the Christmas break in 2019.

**Table 2: reunion airfare entitlement table**

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

4 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
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10.10.14.{A} Once an awardee qualifies for the reunion airfare, they must contact the Student Contact Officer 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 Student Contact Officer 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.

10.10.15.{I} The institution must record the approved reunion airfare in OASIS.

### Independent Travel

10.10.16.{A} Awardees must advise the Student Contact Officer in advance of all overseas travel not covered under the reunion airfare entitlements.

10.10.17.{A} Awardees are responsible for arranging their own travel insurance associated with any independent travel.

## 10.11. Completion travel

10.11.1. {I} 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 the awardee to travel home at the completion of their scholarship in accordance with 10.6. 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.

10.11.2. {I} The institution must arrange the awardee's return home travel so that they depart Australia before their visa expires or within 30 days of the scholarship end date, whichever comes first.

10.11.3. {I} If required, the institution must be able to obtain confirmation from the travel agent who has booked the awardee's travel home that the awardee has completed the travel. The awardee is not permitted to make any change to the completion travel ticket, including cashing in the ticket. The travel agent must notify the institution immediately if there is a 'no show' for scheduled travel. The institution should notify DFAT immediately that there was a 'no show' for completion travel.

10.11.4. In some cases, it may be appropriate to include quarantine and other in-home country related COVID-19related costs as part of completion travel. Institutions should contact the Australia Awards Section for guidance, where appropriate if prior guidance is unavailable.

10.11.5. {A} Awardees who fail to make travel arrangements to depart Australia within 30 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 Home Affairs.

## 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 of the National Standards for International Students as defined in the institution's contract with DFAT.

### 11.2. Arrival in Australia

- 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, if within a reasonable distance of the institution. Costs incurred to meet awardees will be at the institution's expense.
- 11.2.2. {P} Program Areas arrange the awardee's travel to Australia and must:
- i. ensure awardees arrive on or after the recommended date of arrival as specified in the institution's placement offer. This is to be no more than 14 days before the awardee is scheduled to commence the mandatory Introductory Academic Program or in-Australia preparatory program.
  - 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, and by 10 December at the latest for awardees commencing in semester one unless there has been a delay in finalising the placement or issuing a visa.
  - iii. amend an awardee's travel details as soon as possible in OASIS if their arrival details change.
  - iv. confirm that each awardee has communicated their arrival plan to the student contact officer at their university.
- 11.2.3. {P} If a Program Area does not provide timely and accurate advice to the institution and additional costs are incurred, the institution may pass these costs onto the Program Area.
- 11.2.4. {A} Awardees must 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.

### 11.3. Accommodation

- 11.3.1. Awardees are responsible for arranging their own long-term accommodation and for the costs of all accommodation in Australia for themselves and their family. If asked, institutions will arrange

initial accommodation for awardees for a period of at least seven days from when they arrive in Australia.

- 11.3.2. Awardees with disability may have special requirements in relation to accommodation and this will impose different responsibilities on Program Areas and institutions (see [Chapter 9](#)).
- 11.3.3. {A} After the awardee has accepted their scholarship offer, they are required to immediately contact the institution if they would like to be accommodated on-campus (even if only for the first semester). Institutions may have a ballot system for on-campus accommodation and will require an early indication of interest.
- 11.3.4. {A} All awardees are to prepare a plan for their transport and accommodation when they arrive in Australia. The awardee is to share this plan with the student contact officer at their institution at least fourteen days before their planned arrival in Australia.

### Initial accommodation

- 11.3.5. {A} 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 Australia. If they fail to advise the institution, the awardee will be responsible for all associated costs of that accommodation.
- 11.3.6. {A} Awardees with accompanying family members may ask the institution to include the family members in the initial accommodation booking. Institutions are not required to make accommodation arrangements for family members.
- 11.3.7. {I} The institution must arrange initial accommodation for awardees, unless the awardee advises otherwise in writing.
- 11.3.8. {I} The initial accommodation must:
  - i. be moderately priced
  - ii. be clean and secure
  - iii. be furnished and have heating or cooling as necessary
  - iv. have access to cooking facilities or to appropriate food outlets.
- 11.3.9. {I} Institutions should provide awardees with details of local shops, food outlets, public transport and other services near the accommodation.
- 11.3.10. {I} 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

- 11.3.11. {A} Awardees are advised to begin looking for accommodation before they leave their home country. However, they should not enter into a

legally binding contract or lease before arriving in Australia and without having viewed the accommodation.

11.3.12. A number of websites and internet-based agencies provide assistance for students to find accommodation in Australia. Awardees should only use reputable organisations and may seek advice from the Student Contact officer at their university about which organisations to use for the location of the university.

11.3.13. {I} The institution must advise awardees about:

- i. availability and costs of residential colleges, international houses or hostels attached to the institution, including accommodation suitable for people with disability or special needs.
- ii. the range of private accommodation options available, including accommodation suitable for people with disability or special needs.
- iii. information on tenancy requirements, tenancy protection, establishing utility connections, and rental prices including additional costs such as gas or electricity.

## 12. Academic support

### 12.1.Introductory Academic Program

- 12.1.1. The Introductory Academic Program is mandatory for all awardees. It is intended to provide awardees with support during their first weeks in Australia; prepare them for study in Australia; enhance their ability to meet the demands of their studies; and maximise the likelihood of success in their course by the scholarship completion date. The IAP may enable an institution to monitor an awardee's capability and identify those who may need further assistance during their studies.
- 12.1.2. The Introductory Academic Program will be conducted over a four to six week period.

12.1.3. {A} Attendance at the Introductory Academic Program is compulsory for all awardees. Failure to attend the Introductory Academic Program may result in termination of the scholarship.

12.1.4. {A} Annex A contains detailed information about the IAP.

### 12.2.Supplementary academic support

- 12.2.1. A limited amount of supplementary academic support is available where the institution, awardee or Program Area identifies that assistance is required in line with the institution's academic requirements. Funds may be used for:
- Tutoring and other academic support related to the awardees principal course of study.
  - SAS entitlements can be used for domestic academic training or workshops directly related to the awardees main course of study and this includes to attend conferences (**attendance fees only**) where the conference is in Australia. SAS entitlements may not be used for attending conferences outside Australia and cannot be used for airfares to any conferences.
  - editing theses, printing and binding costs.
- 12.2.2. Supplementary academic support is accrued at A\$500 every six months (i.e. A\$1000 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 A\$500).

12.2.3. {A} Awardees wanting to access the supplementary academic support funds must contact the Student Contact Officer at their institution and gain approval for the use of these funds. If the institution approves the use of the funds, the institution will advise the awardee whether the institution will pay the approved funds directly to the service provider, or if the awardee can be reimbursed upon the awardee's presentation of original receipts.



- 12.2.4. {I} When determining the activity to be funded, the institution is expected to consider, but not limited to, whether:
- i. the assistance to be funded with the SAS can be provided at no cost through the institution's academic support mechanisms or
  - ii. the awardee has sufficient remaining accrued funds for the activity after all previous costs against this entitlement have been expensed in OASIS.
- 12.2.5. {I} Once the institution has approved expenditure of supplementary academic support funds for an awardee, the institution must either:
- i. pay the costs of the approved activity directly to the service provider, or
  - ii. reimburse the awardee upon presentation of original receipt(s) for the agreed support service.
- 12.2.6. {I} Supplementary academic support funding must not be used:
- i. to purchase IT hardware, specialised software or textbooks (awardees may use the establishment allowance for this purpose) or
  - ii. to meet the expenses of adjustments made for awardees with disability (as this is the institution's responsibility) or
  - iii. towards any associated costs for fieldwork/field trips or study tour units (either selective or compulsory).
- 12.2.7. {I} 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.

### 12.3. Fieldwork

- 12.3.1. For the purpose of the Australia Awards Scholarships, fieldwork is 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 only a contribution to awardees' fieldwork costs (as detailed in [Section 12.3.5](#)). The fieldwork entitlement only applies to awardees enrolled in a Master's by research, a PhD or a Master's by coursework which has a compulsory research by fieldwork component. The fieldwork entitlement must be included in the institution's initial offer.
- 12.3.3. Fieldwork must be undertaken in Australia or the awardee's home country. In exceptional cases, Program Areas may agree to an awardee undertaking fieldwork in another country. If fieldwork in a country outside the awardee's home country or region is approved, DFAT will contribute a maximum of A\$1500 to cover travel costs only.

- 12.3.4. Fieldwork which is to take place in more than one location in Australia or in the applicant's home country must be identified in the awardee's approved research proposal.
- 12.3.5. For fieldwork undertaken outside Australia, only the international return airfares to the airport closest to the fieldwork location will be funded during the scholarship period. For fieldwork undertaken in Australia, only the return travel from the awardee's city or town of residence to the fieldwork location (where this is outside the city or town of residence) will be funded. Funding will only be provided for return travel to the first location where fieldwork is undertaken in multiple locations. Funding for all other costs associated with fieldwork should be sought from other sources available to awardees, including their academic faculty budget. DFAT will not cover costs which institutions typically cover for other research students.
- 12.3.6. PhD awardees are entitled to three trips that can be either reunion (if unaccompanied) or fieldwork. Master's awardees are entitled to one trip that can be either reunion (if unaccompanied) or fieldwork. The number of fieldwork trips required is determined by the institution (supervisor) subject to the nature of the research.
- 12.3.7. If fieldwork is conducted in the awardee's home country, the awardee is not eligible for reunion airfares in the year fieldwork is undertaken (i.e. a PhD awardee undertakes fieldwork in year 2 is not entitled to reunion airfare in that year but is eligible at the end of years 1 and 3).
- 12.3.8. If fieldwork is conducted in a third country or in Australia, the standard reunion entitlement applies.
- 12.3.9. For awardees with disability, all fieldwork must include a management plan approved by the institution.
- 12.3.10. 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 course of studies as registered in CRICOS.
- 12.3.11. The maximum period which may be approved for fieldwork is 12 months.
- 12.3.12. Fieldwork must not result in an extension to the scholarship.
- 12.3.13. {I} 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.
- 12.3.14. {I} 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).
- 12.3.15. {I} The institution must seek approval from the Program Area (and it may also require approval from the partner government, where relevant) for fieldwork to be undertaken in a third country.

- 12.3.16. {I} The institution is responsible for organising fieldwork travel for the awardee. One return economy class airfare for a Master's awardee and up to three for a PhD may be approved for the awardee to undertake fieldwork essential to their program.
- 12.3.17. {I} The institution must record the actual travel costs and details in OASIS once it has been booked
- 12.3.18. {I} If an awardee becomes ill or is unable to return from their fieldwork as planned, the Student Contact Officer should apply the Suspension Policy (refer 13.4).
- 12.3.19. {P} Program Areas will need to consider the implications of approving fieldwork.
- 12.3.20. {A} Awardees must communicate with and provide all relevant information on the fieldwork to the Student Contact Officer to assist the institution in organising fieldwork travel. Failing to notify the Student Contact Officer may result in the cancellation of an awardee's CLE entitlement.
- 12.3.21. {A} An awardee who is undertaking fieldwork out of Australia and who has dependents with them in Australia must consult the Department of Home Affairs on the policy relating to the dependents staying in Australia or travelling with the awardee.
- 12.3.22. {A} If an awardee becomes ill or unable to complete their research as planned, they must immediately advise their Student Contact Officer and the Suspension policy will be applied (refer [Section 13.4](#)).

## 12.4. Fieldtrips

- 12.4.1. {I} DFAT will only cover the cost of travel for fieldtrips where they are a compulsory requirement of the awardee's study program (i.e. not part of an elective course). The institution must record the cost as part of the academic fees in OASIS at the process placement stage (refer [Chapter 5](#)). Failure to do so may result in funds for the fieldtrip not being approved.
- 12.4.2. {I} If a fieldtrip to a country outside Australia or the awardee's home region is approved by the Program Area, DFAT will contribute a maximum of A\$1500 to cover travel costs only.

## 12.5. Work attachments, placements or work experience

- 12.5.1. The maximum period of a work attachment is 12 months.
- 12.5.2. Work attachments must be undertaken either in Australia or the awardee's home country, noting that the awardee is responsible for all costs. In exceptional cases, Program Areas may agree to work attachments taking place in another country within the region.
- 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 length of the course of studies as registered in CRICOS. Work placements should not result in an extension to the scholarship.

- 12.5.4. Work experience to gain membership of an Australian association will not be supported, where the experience could be undertaken in the awardee's home country to gain membership of the relevant association in that country.

12.5.5. {I} The institution must include the requirement for a work attachment in the institution's original placement offer in OASIS (refer [Chapter 5](#)).

12.5.6. {I} The institution will continue to pay the contribution to living expenses allowance during the work attachment, irrespective of any payment the awardee may receive from the hosting organisation.

12.5.7. {A} The awardee is responsible for:

- i. all costs associated with the work attachment
- ii. ensuring that any work undertaken complies with the Student visa (subclass 500) conditions and Australian taxation requirements.
- iii. information on visa conditions can be found at <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Stud/More/Visa-conditions/visa-conditions-students>
- iv. information on Australian taxation requirements can be found at [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au).

## 12.6. Academic progress

### Satisfactory academic progress

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

12.6.2. {I} 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); and
- iii. ensure that the awardee is on schedule to complete their course by the scholarship completion date and is maintaining an appropriate study load.

### Unsatisfactory academic progress

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

- 12.6.4. {A} 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.
- 12.6.5. {A} If an awardee does not comply with the plan or continues to fail to make satisfactory academic progress the scholarship may be terminated.
- 12.6.6. {I} 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).
    - cross-institution 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
  - iv. request approval for the action plan, through OASIS, from the Program Area (including approval of any additional funds required for additional courses or supplementary academic support).
- 12.6.7. {P} Program Areas must monitor advice from Institutions in OASIS and, where an awardee has been identified as failing to make satisfactory progress, liaise with the institution to ensure funding is available for appropriate academic support to be provided.

### Study load

- 12.6.8. Awardees are not permitted to undertake a part-time study load for any reason other than extenuating circumstances. This is based on the student visa (Subclass 500) eligibility requirements. In keeping with the standard under the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students, institutions may allow awardees to enrol in less than a full-time load in any standard study period (i.e. semester) if:

- i. there are compassionate or compelling reasons for reducing the load;
- ii. the reduced load is part of the institution's strategy and action plan;
- iii. 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 Student Contact Officer;
- iv. the awardee has only a few units left to complete, and these do not constitute a full-time load; and
- v. prerequisite units are not available in that study period.

12.6.9. {A} Awardees may seek approval from their Student Contact Officer 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.

12.6.10. {I} The institution must ensure the awardee follows an enrolment pattern that will allow them to complete within the expected duration in the normal course of events. For further information on the National code of Practice Standards, visit <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/Regulatory-Information/Education-Services-for-Overseas-Students-ESOS-Legislative-Framework/National-Code/Pages/default.aspx>.

## 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 Scholarship, and enrolment at the Australian 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 effect the basis on which the scholarship was granted (e.g. change to field of study), will only be considered if they are the only options available to enable the awardee to successfully complete their program of study. All variations must be approved by the Director of the Program Area within DFAT.
- 13.1.3. Variations will not be approved after the end date of a scholarship.
- 13.1.4. The types of variations that will be considered by DFAT are detailed separately in this chapter.
- 13.1.5. {A} 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.
- 13.1.6. {P} All variations are managed and processed in OASIS by the Program Area and the institution. The only exception to this requirement is for terminations, which are approved by the Director of the Australia Awards Section.
- 13.1.7. {P} Program Areas will determine if partner government approval is required for a variation, after which they may approve variations in accord with the relevant policy and in accord with appropriate financial delegations.
- 13.1.8. {P} Program Areas will endeavour to respond to variation requests within 2-4 weeks, depending on the complexity of the request, detail of information provided, and the priorities of the Program Area.
- 13.1.9. {I} Institutions must seek timely approval from Program Areas as variations frequently involve commitment of new funds. The only exception to this is for terminations, which are approved by the Director of the Australia Awards Section.
- 13.1.10. {I} Institutions must lodge variation requests as early as practical in OASIS. Which must be at least six weeks before the scholarship

completion date if the awardee is in the last semester of their scholarship. Variations submitted less than four weeks before payment batch processing due dates may not be approved prior to the due date of the payment batch.

- 13.1.11. {I} Institutions are to keep awardee's OASIS records up-to-date, particularly when seeking variations (e.g. details of dependents, passport details etc.).
- 13.1.12. {I} 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. scope of the academic difficulty including identification of the specific academic issue (e.g. statistics, essay writing, exams, attendance, research or time management);
  - ii. reasons for the failure, for example family stress, academic stress or health issues;
  - iii. actions to be taken by both the awardee and institution to address the issue in the form of an action plan to address the shortcoming. For example, if an awardee is suffering financial stress, the plan would identify counselling and financial management plans put in place, if research skills support is needed the plan would list extra academic support attended by the awardee and the outcomes of that support;
  - iv. how realistic is it that the awardee will successfully complete the current course; and
  - v. Any option to downgrade the academic award, and if it is being considered.

## 13.2. Withdrawals

- 13.2.1. An awardee may withdraw from their study program and forfeit their Australia Awards Scholarship before or after their arrival in Australia.
- 13.2.2. {A} An awardee who wishes to withdraw from their scholarship must provide advice in writing to:
- i. the Program Area if the awardee has not departed for Australia; and
  - ii. the institution if the awardee is in Australia.
- 13.2.3. {A} Awardees who withdraw from their scholarship have 14 days to leave the Australia. Awardees should contact the Student Contact Officer at their 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 8.9](#)).



- 13.2.4. {P} Program Areas are responsible for processing pre-departure withdrawals in OASIS.
- 13.2.5. {I} Institutions are responsible for notifying Program Areas and gaining their approval to process withdrawals for awardees in Australia who wish to withdraw from their scholarship.
- 13.2.6. {S} The Australia Awards Section must notify the Department of Home Affairs of the awardee's withdrawal if the awardee is in Australia.

### 13.3. Extensions

- 13.3.1. An extension is any increase to the length of a scholarship and is requested by the institution in OASIS and approved by the Program Area.
- 13.3.2. Apart from an Honours year extension, only one extension to a maximum of six months may be approved for the duration of the scholarship. A request for extension will 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 beyond the control of the awardee and the institution. Critical incidents and welfare issues are often best addressed with a suspension.
- 13.3.4. The option to extend an Australia Awards Scholarship will 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; and
  - v. the extension request has been lodged in accord with the instructions at [Section 13.1.9](#).
- 13.3.5. {A} If an extension to the scholarship is approved, the awardee will be responsible for paying any costs associated with gaining a new visa.
- 13.3.6. {A} It is the awardee's responsibility to ensure that they contact the Department of Home Affairs in sufficient time to apply for a new visa to extend their stay in Australia.
- 13.3.7. {A} Awardees are not permitted to self-fund an in-Australia extension to their scholarship. They are permitted to self-fund an extension to complete in their home country, if the institution allows.

- 13.3.8. {P} Program Areas must maintain thorough records of extension requests, approvals and rejections in OASIS, including the rationale for the decision, which must be in line with the extension policy.
- 13.3.9. {I} 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. suspension of their Australia Awards Scholarship;
  - ii. supplementary academic support;
  - iii. enrolling in non-standard sessions (e.g. summer school) to repeat failed subjects;
  - iv. cross-institution enrolment to repeat/replace failed subjects;
  - v. course downgrade;
  - vi. overloading in subsequent semesters only if the awardee is capable;
  - vii. completion of studies from home, particularly for research courses. In such cases the awardee would not receive any further funding from DFAT; and
  - viii. termination of the scholarship if the awardee has failed a subject or failed to make satisfactory progress in a research program in any two semesters during the scholarship period.
- 13.3.10. {I} 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.
- 13.3.11. {I} The institution must submit a study plan signed by the awardee and the institution together with the extension variation for the Program Area's consideration. Research students must submit a letter of support from their supervisor along with a detailed submission timeline.
- 13.3.12. {I} If the awardee is unlikely to achieve the desired outcome with the assistance provided, the institution should recommend termination of the scholarship to the Australia Awards Section. The institution should fund all or part of the course-related 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; and
  - iii. provide appropriate academic supervision and support to the awardee to enable them to complete the scholarship on time.
- 13.3.13. {I} Institutions must maintain thorough records on extension requests, approvals and rejections in OASIS.

### 13.4.Suspensions

- 13.4.1. A scholarship may be suspended if deemed necessary (e.g. for health reasons, family or due to misconduct reasons).
- 13.4.2. A scholarship may be suspended more than once, but the total period of all suspensions must not exceed 12 months.
- 13.4.3. Suspension variations are requested by the institution in OASIS and approved by the Program Area.
- 13.4.4. 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.
- 13.4.5. If a suspension is approved, no contribution to living expenses or other fees or entitlements will be paid for the period of suspension. The OSHC must be suspended for this period as well – should a student remain in Australia; they will be responsible for paying for their Overseas Student Health Cover.
- 13.4.6. Awardees may use their reunion airfare entitlement in advance to fund their return home travel. In the absence of a reunion entitlement DFAT will fund the awardee's return trip airfare. The awardee is responsible for their dependents' airfares.
- 13.4.7. 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.
- 13.4.8. {A} 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 Program Area in-Country during the period of the suspension
  - iii. seek prior approval of DFAT and the institution before returning to Australia at the end of the suspension period;
  - iv. contact the institution at least two months before they intend returning to Australia, to agree upon their scholarship recommencement date;
  - v. contact the Department of Home Affairs for information about visa requirements; and
  - vi. if unable to return home, provide their own Overseas Student Health Cover for the period they are in Australia.
- 13.4.9. {A} If a suspension is granted on medical grounds, the awardee will be required to undergo a medical examination to determine if they are fit to travel and to resume full-time study in Australia. This examination will be at the awardee's expense. A suspension will not be granted for

an awardee to undergo and/or recover from elective surgery (see [Section 14.6.4](#))

- 13.4.10. {A} 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 Australia and before a return flight will be booked on their behalf.
- 13.4.11. {P} Program Areas are to assess suspension requests in line with this policy and seek approval from partner governments where applicable.
- 13.4.12. {P} If a suspension is granted on medical grounds, the Program Areas may be required to assist the awardee in-Country during the period of suspension (see [Sections 15.7](#) and [17.5](#)).
- 13.4.13. {I} 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. {I} 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. {I} The institution should organise suspension travel to the airport closest to the awardee's home and invoice DFAT for the cost. Suspension travel should be organised as soon as possible after the suspension has been approved by DFAT.
- 13.4.16. {I} The institution must suspend the awardee's Overseas Student Health Cover for the suspension period.
- 13.4.17. {I} 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; and
  - ii. is deemed fit to return to their studies, the institution must assist the awardee to obtain a new Student visa (subclass 500)

### 13.5. Transfers

- 13.5.1. A transfer between courses or to another institution is subject to Program Area 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 institution 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 Program Area.

13.5.6. {I} A course transfer is used to transfer an awardee from one course to another at the same institution (at the same or lower level). If the name or CRICOS code of an enrolled course changes, an institution will need to enter a course transfer in OASIS. Institutions are required to provide a strong justification before seeking approval from the Program Area for a transfer.

### **Institution transfer**

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

13.5.8. Acceptable reasons for a transfer are:

- i. movement of an academic supervisor (research awardees);
- ii. the institution ceases to offer the course
- iii. course downgrades; and
- 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 at another university.

13.5.9. For awardees with disability, the Student Contact Officer must contact the Disability Support Consultant before commencing any preparations for transfer.

13.5.10. {A} If an institution transfer is approved, the awardee must meet any costs associated with the transfer (e.g. costs of relocating).

13.5.11. {P} Program Areas may approve a transfer only if:

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

13.5.12. {I} If the course to which an awardee transfers is shorter than the original course, the receiving institution must reduce the duration of the scholarship in OASIS and advise the awardee of their scholarship in line with their reduced study period.

## 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 Program Area and partner government approval where relevant (please note that not all Program Areas allow for an upgrade):
- i. where an institution has recommended an awardee undertake an Honours program; and
  - ii. awardees undertaking a Master's program may be permitted, in very 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 the placement into a PhD program be confirmed during the scholarship application phase. However, as this is not always possible, the following outlines the criteria and procedures Program Areas will apply when considering a request for a scholarship to be upgraded to a PhD.
- 13.6.3. This policy recognises that building research capacity in a developing country will contribute to its economic development and poverty reduction. Allowing upgrades from a Master's 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 Program Areas will be affected 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. Program Areas will file one original and return two to the institution (one for its file and one for the awardee).
- 13.6.5. {A} 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 Australia pending any decision on approvals for an upgrade).
- 13.6.6. {A} 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 Australia; and
  - iii. a brief proposal, including a project timeline, demonstrating how the PhD will be completed within the total of four years, including how the Master's studies to date have contributed to achieving that deadline.
- 13.6.7. {A} Once the Program Area 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 Program Area can be given.
- 13.6.8. {A} If approval for the upgrade is given, the awardee must apply for and self-fund a further visa to stay in Australia beyond the end date of their initial visa (see [Section 8.6](#)).
- 13.6.9. {P} Program Areas and the partner government where applicable, may consider upgrades of exceptional awardees from a Master's to a PhD on a case-by-case basis under the following criteria:
  - i. the PhD will be undertaken at the same institution at which the awardee is studying a Master's program under the scholarship; and
  - 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. {P} Program Areas must advise the Australia Awards Section if an upgrade is approved, and upload the deed of amendment, signed by the awardee, in OASIS.
- 13.6.11. {I} The institution must:
  - i. submit the request for an upgrade, including all supporting documentation listed at [Section 13.6.6](#), to Program Areas 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 support the upgrade; and
  - iii. upload into OASIS copies of all half-yearly reports submitted by the supervisor to the research committee or equivalent.
- 13.6.12. {S} In the event that an upgrade is approved, the Australia Awards Section will provide a "No Objection Letter" for the awardee to apply to the Department of Home Affairs for a further visa to remain in Australia beyond the initial visa end date.

## 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. (A finalisation variation may also be used for this purpose).
- ii. conditions of the scholarship not being met.
- iii. in the case of articulated courses, the first course is completed but not at a sufficient level to undertake the second course.

13.7.2. {I} The institution must advise the Australia Awards Section 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.

13.7.3. {S} The Australia Awards Section will advise the Department of Home Affairs that it is withdrawing support for the awardee's visa 30 days after the end date of the awardee's Australia Awards Scholarship.

## 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. Variations must be raised before the scholarship end date or they will not be approved.

13.8.3. {P} If an entitlement variation is required before the awardee departs for Australia, the Program Area is responsible for entering the entitlement variation.

13.8.4. {P} A deferral variation must be raised before the awardee arrives in Australia.

13.8.5. {P} All variations in OASIS will be processed as soon as possible.

13.8.6. {I} Institutions entering entitlement variations should provide details about why the variation is required to assist the Program Area in its decision-making.

13.8.7. {I} Institutions must raise variations in OASIS as soon as possible to allow Posts sufficient time to process and seek approval.

13.8.8. {I} Entitlement variations for PhD, Master's by research or Master's by coursework with a mandatory fieldwork component should include an updated study plan with timeframes demonstrating that academic completion is likely in the revised time period requested in the variation.



## 13.9.Terminations

13.9.1. DFAT will terminate a scholarship where an awardee:

- i. does not make successful academic progress and remedial strategies have not been successful;
- ii. has infringed or failed to meet the conditions of the scholarship;
- iii. 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);
- iv. 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;
- v. is unable to continue a program due to serious illness or incapacity for medical/mental health reasons, and the awardee does not voluntarily withdraw;
- vi. conducts themselves in a manner which is considered to have transgressed acceptable Australian community standards;
- vii. applies for a different visa other than the Student visa (subclass 500)
- viii. has travelled overseas or undertaking studies overseas without notifying DFAT and/or their institution;
- ix. is found to have committed an act of fraud; and
- x. 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. In some cases, an awardee may be offered the opportunity to downgrade, or withdraw from their scholarship, before a termination is pursued.

13.9.4. {A} The awardee will receive a letter of intent to terminate from DFAT advising:

- i. of the recommendation for their scholarship to be terminated;
- ii. 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 Director, Australia Awards Scholarships, Australia Awards Section, [australiaawardsdelivery@dfat.gov.au](mailto:australiaawardsdelivery@dfat.gov.au), R.G. Casey Building John McEwen Crescent Barton ACT 0221; and
- iii. that if DFAT proceeds with the termination, the awardee will no longer be eligible to hold a Student visa (subclass 500);

13.9.5. {A} If an awardee does not appeal the termination, their Australia Awards Scholarship will be terminated upon approval by the Director of Australia Awards Section.

- 13.9.6. {A} If the awardee appeals, DFAT may:
- i. reject the appeal, in which case DFAT's decision is final; and
  - ii. accept the appeal, in which case the awardee may continue with their course of study but must liaise with the Student Contact Officer at their institution in relation to meeting any conditions advised by DFAT.
- 13.9.7. {A} Where DFAT decides to terminate the awardee's scholarship, the awardee:
- i. will receive a formal letter of termination to advise that the scholarship has been terminated; and
  - ii. must leave Australia and return to their home country within 14 days of their scholarship termination.
- 13.9.8. {A} Awardees should be aware that if their scholarship is terminated, this is a breach of their visa conditions and DFAT will refer the awardees details to the Department of Home Affairs for visa cancellation. If their visa is cancelled, they may be excluded from returning to Australia for three years. The Department of Home Affairs considers an individual's immigration history when making decisions on visa applications. If awardees do not depart Australia within 14 days after their scholarship is terminated, they will incur a debt to the Commonwealth for the total accrued cost of their scholarship.
- 13.9.9. {I} The institution must:
- i. immediately advise the Australia Awards Section via OASIS if it becomes aware of any circumstances that may be grounds for termination, including those detailed in [Section 13.9.1](#); and
  - ii. If the termination is for reasons of academic failure, request terminations at least one month prior to census date if possible, to allow adequate time for the termination to occur, prior to course fees being charged.
- 13.9.10. {I} 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; and
  - ii. liaise with the awardee about complying with any conditions on continuation of their scholarship.
- 13.9.11. {I} If DFAT terminates the scholarship, the institution must assist the awardee to make arrangements to return home within 14 days 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](#)).

13.9.12. {S} Where DFAT decides there are grounds for termination, as outlined in [Section 13.9.1](#), it will provide the awardee with a letter of intent to terminate the scholarship.

13.9.13. {S} If an appeal is received from the awardee, the Director of Australia Awards Section will consider the appeal and either:

- i. accept the appeal, in which case the Australia Awards Section must:
  - consult with the institution about whether conditions are to be imposed on continuation of the scholarship to ensure satisfactory completion of the awardee's study program;
  - advise the awardee of the outcome in writing, including any conditions imposed on the continuation of their scholarship; and
  - provide copies of correspondence to the awardee about his/her appeal to the Student Contact Officer at the relevant institution and Program Area
- ii. reject the appeal, in which case the Australia Awards Section must:
  - send a letter of termination to the awardee;
  - provide a copy the letter to the institution, Program Area and the Department of Home Affairs; and
  - advise the Department of Home Affairs that the awardee's scholarship has been terminated and that DFAT no longer supports the awardee holding a Student visa (subclass 500).

13.9.14. {S} If no appeal is received from the awardee within 14 days, the Australia Awards Section will terminate the scholarship following approval from the Director of Australia Awards Section.

## 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 effect, 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 Australia is involved in (what would otherwise be) a critical incident
  - ix. any time that an awardee notifies that a member of their immediate family has died overseas;
  - x. a natural disaster that occurs outside Australia and may affect an awardee (i.e. in the home-country of awardees). Approaches for responding in these situations are outlined [Chapter 16](#); and
  - xi. any allegations where an awardee is involved in a sexual misconduct or child protection incident.
- 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. Without exception, institutions must notify the Australia Awards Section by email ([enquiries.canberra@australiaawards.org](mailto:enquiries.canberra@australiaawards.org)) copied to Program Areas, 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 Australia Awards Section to be satisfied that appropriate action and supports have been put in place to ensure the welfare of the awardee.
- 14.2.2. Notification must follow the process outlined in this section.

- 14.2.3. {I} The institution must first update the OASIS journal with a record of the welfare incident.
- 14.2.4. {I} Journal notes must be clear, factual and compliant with all relevant State, Territory 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 welfare incident and action taken.
- 14.2.5. {I} Once the OASIS journal is updated, the institution should also send an e-mail to the Australia Awards Section, bringing the incident to the attention of the Australia Awards Section.
- 14.2.6. {I} For any incident involving awardees with disability, the institution must copy the Disability Support Consultant ([disability.support@australiaawards.org](mailto:disability.support@australiaawards.org)) into all emails.
- 14.2.7. {I} 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. {I} Institutions are expected to notify the Australia Awards Section but should include in their e-mail notifications Program Areas managing contractors or Case Managers (if applicable).
- 14.2.9. {I} 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 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, managing contractors and Case Managers 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 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 Scholarship contract, that institutions, managing contractors and Case Managers can share personal information about them and their dependants with DFAT, including sensitive information as defined in the Privacy Act 1988. This enables institutions, managing contractors and case managers 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. {A} 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 their Student Contact Officer if the welfare incident has the potential to affect the awardee's ability to successfully complete their scholarship.
- 14.4.4. {A} DFAT also recommends that awardees bring all critical and welfare incidents involving their family's members to the attention of their Student Contact Officer, if the welfare incident has the potential to affect the awardee's ability to successfully complete their scholarship.
- 14.4.5. {A} 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.

14.4.6. {I} Institutions are responsible for notifying DFAT of welfare incidents. In particular:

- i. Student Contact Officers must ensure that the Australia Awards Section is notified of all welfare incidents as per processes and timelines outlined in [Section 14.2](#).
- ii. DFAT considers the Student Contact Officer to be the primary contact for all welfare incidents.
- iii. DFAT expects institutions to have appropriate protocols in place to ensure that Student Contact Officers are notified immediately should another area of the institutions become aware of an issue before the Student Contact Officer. In such cases, institutions must ensure that personal privacy concerns do not prevent Student Contact Officers, 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 Student Contact Officers are away from the office.

14.4.7. {I} 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, to manage their study load during a difficult time such as altered study plans, tutoring or short-term suspensions.
- iv. In addition to these general procedures, see [Sections 14.4 through 14.11](#) which outline the responsibilities of all parties in response to different types of welfare incidents.

14.4.8. {I} 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.

14.4.9. {P} Where a Program Area is made aware of a welfare incident, by any party other than the Student Contact Officer or the Australia Awards Section they must inform the Student Contact Officer and the Australia Awards Section as soon as possible within business hours.

- 14.4.10. {P} 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.
- 14.4.11. {P} Managing contractors and Case Managers (either in Australia 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.
- 14.4.12. {P} Where a managing contractor or Case Manager is made aware of a welfare incident, DFAT has an expectation that:
- i. Managing contractor or Case Manager must inform the relevant Student Contact Officer and the Australia Awards Section as soon as possible in business hours.
  - ii. Case Managers may also notify their immediate supervisor in Australia, in addition to notifying the relevant Student Contact Officer.
  - iii. After the relevant Student Contact Officer is notified, the Managing Contractor or Case Manager should work with the Student Contact 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 Australia 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 scholarship's 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. {A} 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. {A} However, awardees are not expected to remain silent if they are being made to feel uncomfortable or unsafe, and should report to their Student Contact Officer as soon as possible if:

- i. they are being made to feel threatened or unsafe or
- 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.

14.5.9. {I} Institutions must:

- 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; and
- iii. manage the incident as per the institution's standard conflict resolution and bullying and harassment policies.

## 14.6. Health Issues and 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 managed 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. Because of the potential for complications and long recovery periods which may affect an awardee's ability to complete their scholarship, DFAT strongly recommends that awardees do not undergo elective surgery whilst on-scholarship in Australia. DFAT will not approve a suspension or extension for an awardee who has chosen to undergo elective surgery in Australia, nor will DFAT provide any Contribution to

Living Expenses for awardees who are unable to study for extended periods while recovering from elective surgery.

14.6.5. Institutions are 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. Student Contact 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.

14.6.6. If an awardee experiences a change in their health, DFAT has the following expectations.

14.6.7. {A} Awardees are to monitor their own health and to manage any minor health problems themselves.

14.6.8. {A} However, awardees should report to their Student Contact Officer as soon as possible if:

- i. they have questions about the Overseas Student Health 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
- v. they become pregnant and it may affect their study program; and
- vi. they are made aware that they will have to attend hospital for treatment in the near future.

14.6.9. {A} 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 Australia.

14.6.10. {I} Institutions are to:

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

### Long-term illness

14.6.11. 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.

- 14.6.12. Beyond this six-week period awardees who are unable to study due to serious or chronic health problems should suspend their Australia Awards Scholarship until they have recovered. (See [Section 13.4](#)). This does not apply to awardees who have undergone elective surgery in Australia, see [Section 14.6.4](#).

### **Medical costs**

- 14.6.13. All awardees are provided with Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) to meet their basic medical costs while on scholarship.
- 14.6.14. However, OSHC may not cover all medical expenses incurred by awardees or their dependants during their Scholarship period, coverage of pre-existing conditions is at the discretion of the provider.
- 14.6.15. OSHC does not cover medical costs of a student while they are travelling outside of Australia (including to New Zealand)— students must arrange their own travel insurance for that travel.
- 14.6.16. Awardees are liable for any additional medical costs not covered by OSHC.
- 14.6.17. If an awardee or their dependants are unable to meet their medical expenses in Australia, DFAT may consider suspending their scholarship before 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 does not provide any form of financial assistance to awardees in the event that a family member dies either in Australia or overseas.
- 14.7.2. However, 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.
- 14.7.3. In the event that an awardee's family member dies the following additional responsibilities apply.

- 14.7.4. {I} Institutions must facilitate the provision of support to the awardee and, when possible, any accompanying family members. Support may include access to counselling services.
- 14.7.5. {I} Institutions may approve an awardee's use of a Reunion Airfare entitlement in advance if the awardee needs to return home for the funeral of a family member. Program Areas must be notified in advance of an awardee's departure date.
- 14.7.6. {I} The use of the Reunion Airfare entitlement for this purpose is to be recorded in the OASIS journal.

## 14.8.Pregnancy

- 14.8.1. In order to maximise awardees' chances of successfully completing their Australia Awards Scholarships, DFAT strongly recommends that pregnant awardees defer or suspend their award before resuming their studies in Australia after the birth of their child (see [Sections 6.2](#) and [13.4](#)).
- 14.8.2. Deferral or suspension allows awardees time to recover, to put in place any necessary adjustments or care arrangements, and to organise a visa for their dependants 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; and
  - iii. awardees waiting to give birth and awardees waiting for their child to obtain a visa.
- 14.8.4. {A} On-scholarship awardees are to:
- i. notify their Student Contact Officers of their pregnancy;
  - ii. consider suspending their Australia Awards Scholarship before resuming their studies in Australia after the birth of their child; and
  - iii. keep their Student Contact Officers informed of their condition.
- 14.8.5. {I} Institutions must 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.
- 14.8.6. {I} 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 to give birth. Program Areas must be notified in advance of an awardee's departure date.
- 14.8.7. {I} 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 presents new challenges, which can be stressful for awardees, especially in the initial months. Awardees may be referred to counselling services to help them adjust to life in Australia and to the demands of Australian institutions.

- 14.9.2. All referrals to counselling services should be considered welfare incidents and should be dealt with in accord 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 very little that DFAT can do to rectify the situation. However, DFAT does consider these incidents to be welfare incidents.
- 14.10.2. {A} In addition to reporting the offence to relevant local authorities, DFAT advises all awardees to inform the Program Area.
- 14.10.3. {A} Awardees are responsible for organising their own travel insurance for travel outside of Australia.
- 14.10.4. {I} When the awardee returns to Australia, institutions must meet with the awardee to determine if they require access to counselling services.
- 14.10.5. {P} Program Areas must notify the Australia Awards Section and the relevant institution as per the standard procedure outlined in [Section 14.2](#).
- 14.10.6. {P} If appropriate, the Program Area may facilitate the provision of support to the awardee in order to enable them to return to their studies in Australia.
- 14.10.7. {P} Awardees will not be entitled to financial compensation from DFAT if they are victims of crime overseas. Any support provided by the Program Area will be entirely at its discretion.

## 14.11. Absent awardee

- 14.11.1. If an awardee has been reported to the Student Contact 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. {S} The Australia Awards Section will:
- i. work with the institution to locate the awardee and establish their wellbeing
  - ii. work with the institution and Program Area to recommend a suitable course of action based on the awardee's situation and wellbeing
  - iii. raise the matter to a critical incident if the awardee remains uncontactable in excess of two weeks
  - iv. notify the necessary authorities (including the Department of Home Affairs) if the awardee cannot be located.

## 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 Australian 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 Australia;
  - iii. any time an awardee is uncontactable for two weeks;
  - iv. any incidence of domestic violence involving an awardee, either as a victim or a perpetrator;
  - v. any time that an awardee is admitted to hospital in an emergency and is in a serious condition. For non-serious conditions that may include hospital admission, please refer to Welfare Incident policy ([Chapter 14](#)); and
  - vi. the death of an awardee while they are on-scholarship, in Australia 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 in Australia are outlined [Chapter 16](#) of this document.

### 15.2. Role of Student Contact Officers

- 15.2.1. {I} It is expected that notifications of critical incidents will generally be made by Institutions' Student Contact Officers.

- i. Institutions should have appropriate protocols in place to ensure that Student Contact Officers are notified immediately should another area of the institution become aware of an issue before the Student Contact Officer.

- 15.2.2. {I} 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 Student Contact Officers are away from the office.
- 15.2.3. {I} Student Contact Officers must notify the Australia Awards Section of every critical incident immediately as per the processes in [Section 15.3](#).
- 15.2.4. {I} For any incident involving awardees with disability, the institution must copy the Disability Support Consultant (disability.support@australiaawards.org) into all emails.
- 15.2.5. {I} DFAT considers the Student Contact Officer to be the primary contact for all critical incidents and expects institutions to have appropriate protocols in place to ensure that Student Contact Officers are notified immediately should another area of an institution become aware of an issue before the Student Contact Officer. In such cases, institutions must ensure that personal privacy concerns do not prevent Student Contact Officer, and through them DFAT, being made aware of critical incidents.
- 15.2.6. {I} Institutions will have regard to the impact of the critical incident on the wider student community and manage any negative repercussions, including through social media. Student Contact officers should have a communication strategy in place to identify social media allies and manage stakeholders among the wider community.

### 15.3. Notification of critical incidents

- 15.3.1. {I} The Australia Awards Section 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. Phone +61 2 6261 3888 and email [australiaawardsdelivery@dfat.gov.au](mailto:australiaawardsdelivery@dfat.gov.au).
  - i. There is no exception to this requirement.
- 15.3.2. {I} During business hours, notification should be by a phone call to the Australia Awards Section followed by an e-mail that clarifies all the relevant information sent to [australiaawardsdelivery@dfat.gov.au](mailto:australiaawardsdelivery@dfat.gov.au).
- 15.3.3. {I} 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. {I} Out of office hours notification must be by email which provides all the relevant information.
- 15.3.5. {I} Out of office hours email notifications will receive an out of office message with an emergency contact phone number for the Australia Awards Section. Critical incident emails are monitored 24 hours a day by the Australia Awards Section. At the Student Contact Officer's discretion, they may elect to also call the emergency number, for instance, where an immediate response from DFAT is necessary.
- 15.3.6. {I} Out of office hours email notifications should also include an out of hours contact phone number for the Student Contact Officer or relevant contact person at an institution. The out-of-hours contact phone number can also be found in the OASIS Contact list.
- 15.3.7. {I} 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. {I} Institutions are to notify the Australia Awards Section only and must **not** notify Program Areas, Managing Contractors or Case Managers. It is the responsibility of the Australia Awards Section to notify all other parties.
- 15.3.9. {I} 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. {I} In such cases, the institution may copy in the Case Manager when they provide e-mail notification to the Australia Awards Section. If copied in the Case Manager **must not** forward this e-mail on to any other party.
- 15.3.11. {P} Managing Contractors and Case Managers (either in Australia or overseas) 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. {P} Program Areas should have appropriate protocols in place to ensure that the Student Contact Officer and the Australia Awards Section are notified immediately should they become aware of an issue before the Student Contact Officer is aware. In such cases, Program Areas must ensure that personal privacy concerns do not prevent Student Contact Officer and the Australia Awards Section 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. {P} Where a Managing Contractor or Case Manager becomes aware of a critical incident, they must immediately inform the relevant Student Contact Officer.



- 15.3.14. {P} After the relevant Student Contact Officer is notified the Managing Contractor or Case Manager **must not** take any further action until instructed by the Australia Awards Section.
- 15.3.15. {P} Where a managing contractor or Case Manager cannot contact the Student Contact Officer, they should contact the Australia Awards Section immediately as per the processes in [Sections 15.3.1 – 15.3.7](#).
- 15.3.16. {P} Case Managers may notify their immediate supervisor in Australia, in addition to notifying the relevant Student Contact Officer.
- 15.3.17. {P} Program Areas are responsible for ensuring that Managing Contractors and sub-contractors, including Case Managers are aware of their responsibilities under this handbook.
- 15.3.18. {A} An awardee must immediately contact their Student Contact Officer if they are involved in a critical incident, or if they become aware of a critical incident involving another awardee.
- 15.3.19. {A} Accompanied awardees must ensure their family members understand that they should contact the awardee's Student Contact Officer immediately if the awardee is involved in a critical incident and unable to make contact themselves.
- 15.3.20. {S} Once contacted, the Australia Awards Section will provide instructions to the Managing Contractor or Case Manager on responding to the critical incident.
- 15.3.21. {S} Where a critical incident involves an awardee or an accompanying dependent of the awardee and involves intervention from authorities, such as criminal activity involving the Police or is a medical or health related emergency such as death, the Australia Awards Section will contact the Department of Home Affairs to discuss any visa implications.
- 15.3.22. {S} The right to notify the Program Area is reserved for the Australia Awards Section. The Australia Awards Section will manage, at their discretion, all notification of and communication
- i. within DFAT (including State Offices)
  - ii. with Ministers
  - iii. with any relevant Managing Contractors and Case Managers
  - iv. with relevant Whole-of-Government parties, including as appropriate Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Education, and
  - v. with relevant diplomatic missions, including Consulates and High Commissions.

## 15.4.Principles for managing critical incidents

- 15.4.1. The Australia Awards Section 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; and
  - iii. Rule of Law: Consistency with the legal framework of the relevant State or Territory 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 Scholarship contract, that institutions, Managing Contractors and Case Managers can share personal information about them and their dependants 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 Australian 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. {I} 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 Australia, and the current situation of any accompanying family members; and
- vi. known next steps.

15.5.3. {I} 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. {I} 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 State, Territory 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. {I} 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. {I} Once an incident is formally closed the institution must ensure the report is complete and submit this final version to the Australia Awards Section. A template report is provided in [Appendix B](#) of the Policy Handbook.

15.5.7. {I} A copy of all critical incident reports should be kept on file by the institution.

15.5.8. {I} Ongoing, institution must work closely with DFAT to manage and respond to the critical incident.

15.5.9. {I} Institutions will have regard to the impact of the critical incident on the wider student community and manage any negative repercussions, including through social media.

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 Australia

15.6.1. {I} 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. acknowledge that DFAT does not fund legal assistance;
- v. facilitate the provision of any necessary additional support to the awardee or their family (where possible) as directed by the Australia Awards Section; and
- vi. consider and action the appropriate ongoing management procedures for this incident (see [Sections 15.6.3 – 15.6.9](#)).

15.6.2. {I} 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 has implications for their Student visa (subclass 500).
- 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 Australia 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 Australia Awards Section if any other support is considered appropriate; and
  - 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 Australia.
- 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 found not 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; and
  - 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. {I} Where an awardee is admitted to hospital unexpectedly or in an emergency, institutions should:

- i. ensure the treating doctor is aware of the limitations of the awardee's Overseas Health Cover (OSHC) and if any OSHC exclusion clauses apply;
- ii. monitor the awardee's health and progress closely;
- iii. ensure that the awardee is aware of any limitations of the OSHC, the awardee's responsibilities for any medical or hospital costs that are not covered by the OSHC, and the cessation of their CLE after six weeks of hospitalisation; and
- iv. provide regular updates to DFAT by updating and re-submitting the critical incident report as often as required.

15.7.5. {P} Program Areas may be required to:

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

15.7.6. {I} 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.

- i. this involves the awardee's scholarship being suspended and has implications for their Student visa (subclass 500) and their ability to remain in Australia.

15.7.7. {I} 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; and
- 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. {A} Overseas Student Health Cover does not cover all conditions. Awardees should check their OSHC policy for limitations. Awardees are responsible for any medical costs incurred that are not covered by the OSHC.

15.7.9. {A} 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. {P} 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.

## 15.8. Death of an Australia Awards Scholarship awardee

15.8.1. If an awardee passes away, in Australia 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.

15.8.2. {I} Where an awardee is accompanied, institutions must:

- i. make immediate contact with the accompanying family members and inform the Australia Awards Section;
- ii. if the accompanying family members are not in Australia 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 Australia Awards Section; and
- v. being sensitive to the awardee's cultural traditions, implement the accompanying family's wishes.

15.8.3. {I} Where the Awardee was unaccompanied, institutions should:

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

15.8.4. {I} Institutions will not contact the relevant High Commission or Consulate directly in response to the death of an awardee without first informing the Australia Award Section who will facilitate any such discussions.

15.8.5. {I} If repatriation of the awardee's remains is required, institutions must, in consultation with the Australia Awards Section:

- i. seek advice from the Diplomatic/Consular representative concerning the requirements for returning the body to the awardee's home country; and
- 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.

15.8.6. {I} Institutions may be instructed by the family to make funeral arrangement within Australia.

- 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 Australia Awards Section.
- iii. If costs are going to be incurred in arranging repatriation of remains or funeral services in Australia, institutions must:
- iv. inform the Australia Awards Section in writing, in advance, of all arrangements and costs;
- v. monitor costs and ensure that all costs being incurred are reasonable and appropriate;
- vi. liaise with the Australia Awards Section as costs are incurred; and
- vii. submit separate invoices (outside of OASIS) to the Australia Awards Section for approved costs.

15.8.7. {I} 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; and
- ii. facilitating access to awardee's bank account for the next of kin.

15.8.8. {P} As requested, Program Areas 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 Australia Awards Section;
- iii. assist with in-country arrangements as appropriate; and
- iv. liaise with the Partner Government or nominating authority where relevant.

15.8.9. {S} The Australia Awards Section will:

- i. provide all reasonable support to accompanying family in Australia
- 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;
- v. in consultation with the Program Area, prepare a letter of condolence from DFAT to the next of kin; and
- vi. communicate with Ministers and other government departments where necessary.

## 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 Australia 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 Australia

16.4.1. Any natural disaster in Australia 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 contact their Student Contact Officer as soon as possible.

16.4.4. {I} 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; and
  - are able to return to their studies with minimum disruption.
- ii. notify the Australia Awards Section immediately when it becomes aware of a natural disaster;

- iii. prepare a group critical incident report to DFAT noting:
  - 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; and
  - if at all possible, the report template included at [Appendix B](#) should be used.
- iv. continue to monitor the situation, keep up-to-date records of the natural disaster and its implications for awardees; and
- v. report regularly to the Australia Awards Section

- 16.4.5. {I} 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. {I} 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 contact the Australia Awards Section 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. {A} If you are conducting fieldwork outside Australia in an area that experiences a natural disaster please contact your Student Contact Officer immediately.
  - 16.5.4. {A} If you are concerned about the welfare of friends and family in your home country DFAT advises you to speak to your Student Contact Officer.
  - 16.5.5. {A} If you are scheduled to return to your home country within 14 days of a natural disaster please contact your Student Contact Officer to confirm your travel arrangements.
  - 16.5.6. {I} If any awardees are conducting fieldwork outside Australia in an area that experiences a natural disaster, DFAT should be notified as per the processes outlined in [Section 14.2](#).
  - 16.5.7. {I} If an awardee reports to their Student Contact Officer concerns about natural disasters overseas, DFAT should be notified as per the

processes outlined in  
[Section 14.2.](#)

- 16.5.8. {I} Facilitate the provision of support to any affected awardees and any accompanying family members (where possible).
- 16.5.9. {I} Support may include access to counselling services.
- 16.5.10. {I} 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. {I} If an awardee is due to return to their home country within 14 days of a natural disaster contact the Program Area to confirm it is safe for the awardee to return.
- 16.5.12. {I} 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. {I} The use of the Reunion Airfare entitlement for this purpose should be noted in the OASIS journal.
- 16.5.14. {I} 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. {P} If travel is restricted or considered unsafe the Program Area should contact the Australia Awards Section as soon as possible so that this information can be passed on to awardees in Australia.
- 16.5.16. {S} If advised by the Program Area that travel is restricted or considered unsafe for awardees to return, pass this information on to all relevant institutions.

## 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:
  - i. coursework awardees: either the date advised by the institution that examination results are released, or the date the awardee departs Australia, whichever comes first; and
  - 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 Australia if they are submitting their thesis from home, whichever comes first.
- 17.1.3. {A} Awardees will continue to be paid the contribution to living expenses for five days after the scholarship end date.
- 17.1.4. {A} Awardees who return home prior to submitting their thesis/research work will have a maximum period of two years from their final departure date to submit.
- 17.1.5. {I} Institutions must update and finalise every awardee's OASIS record within seven days of the scholarship end date. See [Section 17.7.2](#) for more information on completing an OASIS record.
- 17.1.6. {I} If a PhD or Master's by research awardee returns home before submitting their thesis, institutions must record that the record is finalised pending results.

### 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. {I} 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;
  - 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; and

- vi. invite Australia Awards Section representatives 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 Australia and return to their home country within 30 days of their scholarship end date, or before their visa expires, whichever comes first.
- 17.3.2. The Department of Home Affairs issues an awardee's visa with an end date of one month after the course end date recorded in OASIS. Regardless of this end date, DFAT will withdraw support for awardees' Student visa (subclass 500) 30 days after their scholarship end date.
- 17.3.3. {A} Awardees must contact the Student Contact Officer at their institution to arrange their return home travel to leave Australia within 30 days of their scholarship end date.
- 17.3.4. {A} 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. {I} Institutions must book the completion travel for all awardees.
- 17.3.6. {I} If an awardee fails to make arrangements with their institution to book their return home travel to leave Australia within 30 days of their scholarship end date, or if an awardee fails to board their flight, the institution must notify the Australia Awards Section.
- 17.3.7. {S} If an awardee fails to depart Australia within 30 days of their scholarship end date, the Australia Awards Section will immediately notify the Department of Home Affairs that DFAT no longer supports the awardee's Student visa (subclass 500).

### 17.4.Remaining in Australia after the scholarship end date

- 17.4.1. As outlined in [Chapter 8](#), awardees are not permitted to remain in Australia, or apply to return to Australia for anything other than short-term visits, for a minimum period of two years after their scholarship end date unless DFAT supports the return.
- 17.4.2. Awardees are not permitted to extend their Student visa (subclass 500) past their scholarship end date to enable them to remain in Australia. This includes, for example, staying on to attend a formal graduation ceremony.
- 17.4.3. After completing their studies, awardees are not permitted to remain in Australia with accompanying family members who may be working or studying.
- 17.4.4. Where an awardee and their spouse are both in Australia on Australia Awards Scholarships, the completing awardee may be permitted to remain in Australia until their spouse completes their scholarship.

17.4.5. {A} Where an awardee intends to remain in Australia while their spouse completes an Australia Awards Scholarship, the awardee who finishes first must:

- i. notify their Student Contact 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); and
- ii. transfer to a Student visa (subclass 500) as a dependant at their own expense
- iii. abide by the two-year exclusion period starting from the date that both awardees depart Australia when the second scholarship is complete.

17.4.6. {I} Where an awardee intends to remain in Australia while their spouse completes an Australia Awards Scholarship, the completing awardee's institution must:

- i. contact the Australia Awards Section to obtain a 'No Objection Letter' for the awardee who is completing to transfer on to a Student visa (subclass 500) as a dependant 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 Program Area should be included in all correspondence; and
- iv. book return home travel for both awardees when the second scholarship is complete.

### 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. This complies with the conditions of the Student visa (subclass 500).
- 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, in consultation with their doctor, must assess whether an awardee is fit to travel.

17.5.4. {A} Awardees must:

- i. demonstrate their fitness to travel with a medical certificate;
- ii. cooperate with the institution and DFAT to organise travel home
- iii. once at home, stay in contact with the Program Area about the status of their health and their capacity to return to their studies; and
- 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 Australia.

17.5.5. {A} Awardees should contact the Department of Home Affairs for advice on whether they need to transfer to a different visa.

17.5.6. {I} 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 Program Area is advised of the awardee's travel details; and
- v. inform the Program Area if Customs or Immigration clearance is required.

17.5.7. {I} Institutions may help the awardee organise the safe packing, transport or storage of their personal belongings.

17.5.8. {P} The Program Area 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 include 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 Australia (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 Australia 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 Student visa (subclass 500) if they are deemed fit to return to their studies; and
- vii. work with the Australia Awards Section 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 Australia Awards Section may approve funding for a medical escort. The provision of such funding is at the discretion of the Australia Awards Section.
- 17.5.11. Any expenditure by the institution on medical escorts requires prior written approval from the Australia Awards Section. 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. {A} 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 Program Area about the status of their health and their capacity to return to their studies; and
- iv. not return to Australia without the prior approval of DFAT and their institution.

#### **17.5.14. {I} Institutions must:**

- i. arrange for an appropriately qualified medical/nursing escort. If possible, the escort should be the same gender as the awardee; and
- ii. seek Australia Awards Section 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.

17.5.15. {P} The Program Area 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.

17.5.16. The Australia Awards Section must:

- i. 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).

## 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 Australia on a visa other than the Student visa (subclass 500) 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. {A} Awardees must:

- i. provide a medical certificate to their Student Contact Officer which clearly states they are unfit to travel and advises an estimated date that they should be fit;
- ii. if required, make arrangements with the Department of Home Affairs to transfer to an appropriate visa and meet all costs associated with the visa change.
- iii. be responsible for all costs associated with their stay in Australia beyond the scholarship end date
- iv. remain in contact with their Student Contact Officer while they are in Australia; and
- v. depart Australia as soon as they are fit to travel.

17.6.5. {I} Institutions must:

- i. inform the Australia Awards Section 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 Australia Awards Section as soon as possible;

- iii. if required, obtain from the Australia Awards Section a 'No Objection Letter' and forward this to the awardee;
- iv. remain in contact with the awardee and, continue to provide pastoral care while they remain in Australia, continue to monitor the awardee's condition and provide regular updates to the Australia Awards Section; and
- v. 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](#)).

17.6.6. {P} The Program Area must contact the awardee's next of kin.

17.6.7. {S} The Australia Awards Section must:

- i. liaise with the Department of Home Affairs as necessary; and
- ii. liaise with the Program Area as necessary.

### **Dependants who are unable to travel**

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

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

17.7.1. As outlined in [Section 17.1.5](#), institutions must update and finalise the OASIS records for every awardee within seven days of the scholarship end date or the awardees departure whichever comes first.

17.7.2. {I} Within seven days of an awardee's scholarship end date or departure, whichever comes first, 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; and
- v. scholarship finalisation.

17.7.3. 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 2020, the completion will occur on 31 December 2020. If the studies are finalised on 15 December 2019, the completion will occur on 30 June 2020.

17.7.4. {I} All expenses must be entered into OASIS before the completion of a scholarship record in OASIS.

## 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 studying in Australia.
- 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. {P} 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.

## 18. Alumni

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

18.1.2. {A} Australian Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates host a variety of networking and professional development events to promote alumni, and to encourage them to stay in touch with one another and with Australia.

18.1.3. {A} As part of an Australia Awards global alumni community, alumni are strongly encouraged to stay connected by:

- i. contacting post in their home country;
- ii. participating in alumni activities and events held by post;
- iii. signing up for online platforms that enable networking amongst alumni, and between alumni and Australia; and
- iv. joining their local alumni network.

18.1.4. {A} Alumni are encouraged to take part in post-award monitoring and evaluation activities (for example, participating in surveys and maintaining their reintegration plans).

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

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

18.1.7. {P} The Program Area should actively engage with their alumni. Guidance on good practice activities and advice on alumni engagement is available from the DFAT Scholarships and Alumni Branch.

## ANNEX A:

### Introductory Academic Program

The IAP is mandatory for all Australia Awards scholarship holders. The program aims to assist students to make the transition from their home country to Australia and prepares them to undertake tertiary education in the Australian setting.

The course combines an academic program, welfare and cultural understanding and assists students to understand the Australian education system. Students will consolidate their language proficiency, sharpen their academic skills and gain an understanding of academic culture, particularly with reference to the tertiary institution they are attending.

Larger institutions will conduct IAPs for Australia Awards students only while some other institutions provide a short introductory program for Australia Awards scholars after which the students join the broader orientation and enrolment program for all international students at that institution. Institutions with few Australia Awards students may join with other institutions in the same geographic location to deliver a joint IAP.

The following topics will be covered over a four-week period, this list is not exhaustive, and institutions will incorporate other institution specific activities:

- an introduction to living in Australia, which includes aspects such as history, Australian and local culture, Australian language and ideas of tolerance;
- introduction to student support services staff and services including counselling, student loans, student union, postgraduate student associations;
- a Welcome to Country and introduction to Australian indigenous culture;
- familiarisation with the local environment including campus tour, institution culture, institution services and facilities, local do's and don'ts, local area transport;
- networking sessions to meet other international and domestic students and develop the types of friendships that will provide them with a network to draw on during their time in Australia;
- institution specific requirements for academic success and good academic conduct, in particular essay writing, note taking, referencing, presentation skills, critical thinking, research techniques, study skills and report writing. This may also introduce awardees to the institutions' remote/virtual learning systems and social media expectations;
- living in Australia - opening bank accounts, an introduction to local shops and services, transport, campus familiarisation, student ID card, renewables, recycling and waste disposal, where to find embassies/consulates etc.;
- library and IT services available at the institution and computer skills development;
- accommodation – where to find it, legal process/lease negotiation, arranging connection of services, obtaining furniture and household goods;
- understanding the Australia Awards allowances and budgeting guidance;

- Overseas student health cover, medical welfare and health services in Australia;
- staying safe – personal security, sexual well-being, water safety and what to do in an emergency;
- government and interaction with local agencies, such as police;
- Australian foods and foods from home;
- visa issues;
- introductions to academic's supervisors and coordinators and discussions about their expectations;
- a walking tour or familiarisation tour of the closest large town or city;
- discussions on family entry, childcare and schooling;
- sporting and interest groups; and
- practice in oral presentation skills, networking skills and set up social media profiles.

It is our experience that the IAP sets students up for success in their scholarship. Data from previous years demonstrates that awardees who do not complete their scholarship or who fail academically are often those who have not completed an IAP.

## 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 Australia. 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 country].

Yours sincerely,

..... Date .....

Australia Awards Scholarship awardee's signature

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 Australia. 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 AWARDEE:	OASIS REFERENCE:
CITIZENSHIP:	AUSTRALIAN 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’

#### The Student visa (subclass 500)

All Australia Awards Scholarship recipients and their dependants are required to have subclass 500 visas for the duration of their time in Australia. This visa has certain conditions that help DFAT ensure awardees are committing their obligation to depart and remain outside of Australia for at least two years from the completion of their Scholarship.

#### No Objection Letters

DFAT approval is required before awardees will be granted a subclass 500 visa, and at all other times where a 500 visa holder applies for a new visa (including a new visa for a scholarship extension). In most cases DFAT’s approval is captured in a ‘No Objection Letter’. ‘No Objection Letters’ are required for both awardees and their dependants.

#### Carer ‘No Objection Letters’

When assisting awardees with disability who require a carer, the Program area is responsible for providing a ‘No Objection Letter’ for the carer, called the NOL – Awardee Carer Requirement. The DSA can also be supplied however the NOL will ensure program areas can apply for a visa as soon as possible, rather than waiting for the DSA to be complete. Carers who are the spouse of the awardee with disability should be granted a subclass 500 visa; all other carers should be granted a Guardian Visa (subclass 590).

#### Mobilisation

The Australia Awards Scholarship Contract meets Department of Home Affairs requirements for the initial visa application for both awardees and their declared dependants. DFAT Program Areas issues ‘No Objection Letters’ for an awardee’s dependant family members if they do not mobilise at the same time as the awardee.

#### On-Scholarship

When an awardee is on-scholarship in Australia, the Australia Awards Section issues ‘No Objection Letters’ to support visa applications for:

- a further visa – when an extension to an awardee’s Australia Awards Scholarship, beyond the original award period, is approved;
- newborn dependants – when an awardee has a baby during their scholarship period;
- and
- transferring to a different visa type – when an awardee/dependant transfers to a different 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 return to Australia for a short visit (up to three months) within the two years exclusion period ‘No Objection Letters’ are issued by Program Areas; and

post scholarship externally funded studies – when a DFAT alumni returns to Australia to undertake externally funded studies within the two-year exclusion period ‘No Objection Letters’ are issued by the Australia Awards Section.

### **Visa Process for Dependants**

The Program Area is responsible for providing a ‘No Objection Letter’ for dependants.

All dependent family members must be declared in an awardee’s initial visa application, regardless of whether they are intending to accompany the awardee to Australia. Family members who are not declared will not be eligible for a Student visa (subclass 500) if they wish to join the awardee at a later date.

## APPENDIX D: COVID-19

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Appendix is to specify additional responsibilities that institutions and awardees must comply with as a result of changes to the Australia Awards Scholarships program generated by COVID-19.
- 1.2 The requirements set out in this Appendix are in addition to all of the obligations applicable under this Australia Awards Scholarships Policy Handbook and will apply:
  - i. for as long as the Australian, State and Territory governments have in place policies and procedures that seek to restrict the movement of individuals into and out of Australia in order to reduce the incidence of COVID-19 transmission throughout the Australian population; and
  - ii. until awardees depart Australia to return to their country of origin.
- 1.3 The contents of this Appendix must be read in conjunction with the contents of the Australia Awards Scholarships Policy Handbook and Australia Awards Scholarships Contract. If there is any inconsistency between the obligations specified in this Appendix of the Australia Awards Scholarships Policy Handbook and the Australia Awards Scholarships Contract, the obligations specified in this Appendix will take precedence but only to the extent of the inconsistency.

### 2. Key Principles

- 2.1 The key principles underlying this Appendix are as follows:
  - i. the health and wellbeing of the Australian and international student communities is paramount;
  - ii. the welfare of awardees participating in the Australia Awards Scholarships program is a high priority for all governments; and
  - iii. the Australian Government is working closely with State and Territory governments to support COVID-19 preparedness and response.

### 3. Institutional Welfare Responsibilities

- 3.1 Institutions are required to provide appropriate levels of pastoral care to awardees this includes, but is not limited to:
  - i. support to new or deferred awardees arriving in Australia as part of their mandatory quarantine, e.g. provision of an introduction pack including emergency contact numbers and other essentials that may be required for a new arrival to Australia;

- ii. assistance with and/or provision of a SIM card to enable new, deferred or returned awardees to have an Australian mobile no. for contact and/or other purposes during mandatory quarantine; and
  - iii. access to counselling services, medical clinics and/or other support mechanisms which will assist awardees on arrival and during the term of their scholarship.
- 3.2 Institutions should notify DFAT of any welfare incidents which may have arisen in accordance with [Section 14](#) and any critical incidents in accordance with [Section 15](#).

#### 4. Protocols and Preconditions for International Student Arrivals

- 4.1 Institutions are required to have a detailed International Student Arrivals Plan. The plan should be developed in close consultation with the Australian Government International Students Taskforce and relevant Commonwealth agencies. The plan must detail how the preconditions for the return of international students will be met.
- 4.2 Awardee travel will be subject to meeting the requirements imposed by the Australian Government, as determined by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, and must meet the requirements imposed by State and Territory governments.

#### 5. Mobilisation of Awardees

- 5.1 Mobilisation travel of new, deferred and suspended awardees will be subject to the protocols and preconditions for international student arrivals to Australia as referred to in clause 4 of Appendix D.
- 5.2 While COVID-19 border and flight restrictions continue to persist, and until confirmed otherwise by the DFAT Scholarships and Alumni Branch, **awardees are required to mobilise without dependents**. Dependents accompanying awardees in Australia are permitted to remain while it is safe to do so.
- 5.3 Carers will continue to be able to mobilise with awardees; though, under some circumstances, and at DFAT's discretion it may be appropriate to defer an awardees commencement or return to Australia based upon advice from the Disability Support Advisor.

#### 6. Mode and Location of Study Delivery

- 6.1 COVID-19 has caused a profound shift in the modes of study delivery for awardees. While the objective of Australia Awards scholarships is for online study to represent less than 25% of the total study period, as stated in [Section 2.5.5](#), COVID-19 has made this more difficult. While

COVID-19 continues to impact awardees, this requirement is not mandatory.

- 6.2 A future review of this threshold will be considered in the context of current and future changes that are transforming the education sector and the study experience for awardees.
- 6.3 Study, including online study, is only permitted in Australia; with the exception of approved Fieldwork as stated in [Section 12.3](#). Failure to comply with this requirement may result in termination in accordance with [Section 13.9](#).

## **7. Extension Variations**

- 7.1 In accordance with [Section 13.3.3](#), COVID-19 is deemed an unforeseen and exceptional circumstance beyond the control of the awardee and the institution. As such; extensions, beyond those referred to in [Section 13.3.2](#), will be approved for awardees able to demonstrate COVID-19 has affected their studies or where awardees are unable to undertake their completion travel due to border and flight restrictions.
- 7.2 Where an extension is provided as a result of the impact of COVID-19 on an awardees' studies the visa costs will be funded in accordance with clause 8.2 of Appendix D.

## **8. Visa Extensions**

- 8.1 Awardees unable to return home at the conclusion of their scholarship due to COVID-19 border or travel restrictions will need to apply for a new visa in accordance with [Section 8.5.2](#).
- 8.2 In accordance with clause 7.1, where the visa extension is a result of COVID-19 border or travel restrictions at the conclusion of the awardees scholarship, the costs of the visa extension, including related medical costs, will be funded as part of the awardees scholarship. Further details are included in [Section 10.2](#).

## **9. Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)**

- 9.1 In accordance with [Section 10.6](#), it's a requirement for awardees, and dependents where applicable, to retain an OSHC policy at all times.
- 9.2 All OSHC policies cover awardees and/or dependents and carers in the event they contract COVID-19.

## **10. Deferrals**

- 10.1 In accordance with [Section 6.4.2](#), COVID-19 is deemed an exceptional case which is beyond the control of the awardee. As such; deferrals

greater than 12 months will be approved for awardees impacted by COVID-19 border or travel restrictions.

- 10.2 The deferral decision and timeframe, in such cases as noted in clause 7.1 of Appendix D, is at the discretion of the DFAT Scholarships and Alumni Branch in consultation with Program Areas.

## **11. Suspensions**

- 11.1 In accordance with [Section 13.4](#), scholarships may be suspended if deemed necessary, e.g. health or family reasons.
- 11.2 Due to the impact of COVID-19 related global border and travel restrictions a scholarship may be suspended for a period in excess of 12 months. Scholars will be able to extend their suspension until they are permitted to return to Australia to recommence their scholarship. The 12 month maximum suspension period stipulated in [Section 13.4.2](#) excludes COVID-19 related suspensions due to welfare issues, global border or travel restrictions.
- 11.3 Awardees on scholarship, who are unable to return home due to border or flight restrictions, will only be permitted to suspend their scholarship under exceptional circumstances. Once a scholarship is suspended all entitlements will cease immediately.

## **12. Reunion Travel**

- 12.1 Due to COVID-19 border or travel restrictions awardees eligible for reunion fares, in accordance with Section 10.9, may not be able to travel on a reunion fare entitlement. In such cases where eligible awardees are unable to undertake reunion travel, they will not accrue an entitlement to utilise foregone reunion fares in future calendar years.
- 12.2 Any costs associated with quarantine and COVID-19 related medical tests, required to be completed to permit reunion travel, are the sole responsibility of the awardee.
- 12.3 Awardees that choose to utilise a reunion fare entitlement are required to suspend their studies upon travel as they may not be permitted to return due to COVID-19 border or travel restrictions. This policy will be reviewed in response to any future changes in policy by the Australian Government regarding Australian border entry requirements and international border and flight restrictions.

## **13. Completion Travel**

- 13.1 Due to COVID-19 border and flight restrictions institutions may experience difficulties in booking awardee completion travel. This may



require awardees who have completed their scholarship but unable to return home to seek an extension to the term of their scholarship until such time border and flight restrictions ease for the awardee to return home. In such instance's awardees:

- i. should contact their respective Embassy, High Commission or Consulate-General to register their need to return home upon completion of their scholarship. In some cases, charter flights may be the only means of returning home;
- ii. be ready to undertake completion travel promptly once notified of a flight or available flight options to return home.
- iii. should be recorded as finalised in OASIS on the date of departure from Australia; and
- iv. will continue to receive their CLE for five days after they depart Australia.

13.2 Once border and flight restrictions ease and awardees, and/or dependents and carers, are able to travel home; awardees must do so on the first available flight. Awardees who have had a scholarship extension as a result of being unable to return home, do not have the discretion to remain in Australia until the expiry of their visa. The cost of travel, for accompanying dependents, is not a valid reason to not travel.

13.3 Where an awardee is in Australia with dependents and/or a carer, the accompanying dependents or carer must not remain in Australia when the awardee has departed. Failure to comply with this may result in the termination of the awardees scholarship in accordance with [Section 13.9](#).

13.4 All other aspects of completion travel must be completed in accordance with the policy stated in [Section 10.11](#).

## **14. Quarantine**

14.1 Awardees travelling to Australia as part of their mobilisation travel will have any COVID-19 medical tests associated with their mobilisation travel and mandatory quarantine costs, in Australia, funded as part of their scholarship.

14.2 Awardees departing Australia on completion travel will have any COVID-19 medical tests and mandatory quarantine costs, in Australia or their home country, funded as part of their scholarship.

- 14.3 COVID-19 related medical and quarantine costs in a third country is the responsibility of the awardee unless the travel is approved by the DFAT Scholarships and Alumni Branch and Program Area.
- 14.4 Quarantine costs for carers will only be funded when travelling with the awardee.
- 14.5 COVID-19 related medical tests and quarantine costs associated with international travel for dependents is not funded as part of the scholarship.

## **15. English Language Requirements**

- 15.1 Applicants and awardees must continue to meet the English language requirements as specified in [Section 2.4.4](#).
- 15.2 Due to the impact on applicants undertaking approved English language tests in a number of countries due to COVID-19 restrictions, the validity period specified in [Section 2.4.3](#) has been relaxed. Until such time as deemed appropriate, the two-year English language test validity period will be relaxed.
- 15.3 An applicant or awardee will need to meet the institutions English language requirements to receive an Australia Awards scholarship, e.g. if the institutions validity period of an IELTS test is three years then the applicant or awardee must meet this requirement.
- 15.4 All other requirements as specified in [Section 2.4](#) aside from the validity period of accepted English language tests will continue to apply.

## **16. Professional Development Courses**

- 16.1 Awardees, unable to return home upon completion of their scholarship are required to undertake professional development courses as part of the DFAT-sponsored student visa (sub-class 500) requirements.
- 16.2 Courses are available online and can be either offered by an awardees existing institution or elsewhere.
- 16.3 Courses are capped at two per awardee.
- 16.4 An extension variation will need to be submitted once the awardee has selected their preferred course, refer [Section 10.3](#).