

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships Policy

<b>Approving authority</b>	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
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<b>Document URL</b>	<a href="http://policies.griffith.edu.au/pdf/Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20Scholarships%20Policy.pdf">http://policies.griffith.edu.au/pdf/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships Policy.pdf</a>
<b>TRIM document</b>	2016/7006133
<b>Description</b>	This policy sets out the University's processes for managing scholarships available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, and the conditions for the award of these scholarships. The scholarships include: the Commonwealth Scholarships Program, Patience Thoms First Peoples (Honours and Postgraduate) Scholarships and Neville Bonner Scholarship. This policy must be read in conjunction with the Commonwealth Scholarships Program Guidelines made under Section 238-10 of the Higher Education Support Act 2003.

### Related documents

[Bachelor Degree \(AQF Level 7\) Policy](#)

[Bachelor Honours Degree \(AQF Level 8\) Policy](#)

[Student Complaints Policy](#)

[Student Review and Appeals Policy](#)

[Student Review and Appeals Procedures](#)

[Review of Decision Form](#)

[Student Misconduct Policy](#)

[Academic Standing, Progression and Exclusion Policy](#)

[Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

[Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines made under Section 238-10 of the \*Higher Education Support Act 2003\*](#)

[\[Aim\]](#) [\[Administration\]](#) [\[Eligibility and Selection Criteria\]](#) [\[Benefits and Payment Arrangements\]](#) [\[Conditions\]](#) [\[Review and Appeals\]](#)

## 1. AIM

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship program is designed to increase the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher education, and support their successful progression to graduation. The program also recognises and supports their need to relocate from regional and remote areas. Refer: <https://www.pmc.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/education/indigenous-student-success-program>.

## 2. ADMINISTRATION

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) or nominee is responsible for the administration of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship Program.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) approves the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship Program conditions annually.

The University ensures compliance for the Commonwealth Scholarships Program under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* sections 46-20 Commonwealth Scholarships Program Guidelines. The Commonwealth Scholarships Program Guidelines, in conjunction with this document govern the application, selection and offer process.

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### 3. ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Funding for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship program is provided by the:

- Commonwealth Government for the Commonwealth Scholarships; and
- University budget for other Scholarships, as approved by the University Council.

Funding from other sources, including contributions from Academic Groups or external donors, may be allocated to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships.

Three categories of Commonwealth Scholarships are available:

- Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarships;
- Indigenous Education Scholarships; and
- Indigenous Access Scholarships.

The Commonwealth Government determines the number of Commonwealth scholarships that are available in any year. The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) determines the number of other scholarships in accordance with the budget approved by the University Council.

#### 3.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship, applicants must, at a minimum, meet the basic eligibility requirements as outlined in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, any additional requirements as stipulated in the Commonwealth Scholarships Program Guidelines, and this document for scholarship variations.

Applications are made on the designated application form and accompanied by relevant documentation that substantiates eligibility and merit.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships are only available to persons of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent and applicants are required to provide proof of such descent.

An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is someone who:

- is of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent;
- identifies as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person; and
- is accepted as such by the community in which they live, or have lived.

The University is guided by the Australian Standard Geographical Classification Remoteness Areas (ASGC Remoteness Areas) in determining the regional and remote status eligibility for a Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship applicant.

Applicants are required to be Australian citizens. Proof of Australian citizenship must be provided if an applicant was born outside Australia.

Commonwealth Scholarships cannot be transferred between universities. Scholarship recipients seeking to transfer to another university are required to submit an application to the new institution where, as a scholarship applicant, they are considered as a new, not a continuing student. The Scholarships Office is responsible for contacting the relevant commonwealth government department to establish the number of payments to which a transferring applicant is entitled.

Normally a student is considered for only one Griffith University Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarship including:

- Commonwealth Scholarship

- Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarships (ICAS)
- Indigenous Commonwealth Education Scholarships (ICES)
- Indigenous Access Scholarships (IAS)
- Patience Thoms First Peoples (Honours and Postgraduate) Scholarship
- Neville Bonner Scholarship

Applicants in receipt of either a Centrelink Start-Up Scholarship or a Relocation Grant are not eligible for a Commonwealth Scholarship.

Applicants previously in receipt either in part, or in whole, of an Indigenous Access Scholarship are not eligible to re-apply for an Indigenous Access Scholarship.

In exceptional circumstances, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) may approve a student to receive more than one equity scholarship.

Students undertaking a Bachelor Honours Degree program are eligible for a Commonwealth Scholarship.

Under transitional arrangements, the Commonwealth Scholarships Program continues to support recipients of a Commonwealth Learning Scholarship prior to 1 January 2010, providing they maintain their eligibility.

## 3.2 Selection

### 3.2.1 Commonwealth Scholarships and Neville Bonner Scholarships

Applications for a Commonwealth Scholarship or Neville Bonner Scholarship are made through Griffith University's Uni-Start Equity Scholarship Scheme. Applicants are also encouraged to complete the Educational Access Scheme (EAS) section on the QTAC/UAC Application.

The University's Uni-Start Equity Scholarship Scheme supports applicants who have experienced educational and/or financial disadvantage.

Applicants are assessed according to five (5) categories:

- Category 1 Financial Hardship
- Category 2 Home Environment and Responsibilities
- Category 3 English Language Difficulty
- Category 4 Personal Illness and Disability
- Category 5 Educational Disruption

Scholarships are assessed against the eligibility and selection criteria. An order of merit list for each type of scholarship is prepared by the Scholarships Office. Assessment is made on the basis of the educational impact of the applicant's circumstances, not the severity of the circumstances of disadvantage. If there are insufficient scholarships for all applicants on the same score, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) or their nominee will determine the allocation.

Commonwealth Scholarships are awarded as packages, as follows:

- Applicants awarded an Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship are also awarded an Indigenous Commonwealth Education and an Indigenous Access Scholarship.
- Applicants awarded an Indigenous Education Scholarship are also awarded an Indigenous Access Scholarship (depending on availability).
- Surplus Indigenous Access Scholarships may be awarded without awarding either an Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship or an Indigenous Education Scholarship.
- Applicants awarded only an Indigenous Access Scholarship are referred to Centrelink to discuss their entitlement for the Relocation and/or Student Start-Up Scholarship.

An applicant will not be selected for a Commonwealth Scholarship unless the University is satisfied that the student either meets, or will meet, the eligibility criteria as set out in the Commonwealth Scholarship Program Guidelines, by the first census date of the scholarship period.

### **3.3.2 Patience Thoms First Peoples (Honours and Postgraduate) Scholarships**

Applications for Patience Thoms First Peoples (Honours and Postgraduate) Scholarships are submitted on the appropriate application form available on the Scholarship website, and are assessed by the Patience Thoms Scholarships Committee against the eligibility criteria. Applicants are required to meet the relevant School requirements for admission to an Honours program, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Masters program on either a full-time or part-time basis. An order of merit list is prepared for the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)'s approval.

The Patience Thoms Scholarship Committee membership shall be:

- Chairperson - Head of GUMURRII Student Support Unit or nominee;
- One academic staff member (to be invited);
- One general staff member from the GUMURRII Student Support Unit appointed by the Manager of the GUMURRII Student Support Unit;
- One general staff member from Student Services, nominated by the Academic Registrar; and
- An Undergraduate Scholarships Officer nominated by the Director, Student Administration.

The Scholarships Office shall provide secretarial support to the Committee.

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## **4. BENEFITS AND PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

### **4.1 Commonwealth Scholarships and Neville Bonner Scholarships**

Commonwealth Scholarships are determined by the current Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines as published by the relevant commonwealth government department. The value of the scholarships is indexed annually and advised to the University by the Commonwealth Government.

Scholarship benefits comprise a maximum of eight payments.

Commonwealth Scholarship payments are made to recipients in each six month period (1st of January to 31st of June and 1st of July to 31st of December). Trimester 3 is excluded.

The payment is made within six weeks of the first census date of each six month period.

Scholarship recipients are responsible for providing their financial institution details for deposit of the scholarship benefit. Scholarship benefits paid into a nominated account are deemed to be paid directly to the recipient.

Under the Higher Education Act 2003, a Commonwealth Scholarship recipient must sign an Institution Acceptance Form agreeing to confirm:

- the type and value of the Commonwealth Scholarship awarded;
- they are undertaking their first undergraduate degree;
- they have not previously been in receipt of a Commonwealth Scholarship from another institution; and
- they have not previously been in receipt of an Indigenous Access Scholarship.

If a scholarship recipient knowingly provides misleading information or accepts benefit funds that are not due to them, their scholarship is re-assessed and the infringement reported to the relevant commonwealth government department. Under paragraph 2.25.15 (Provision of False or Misleading Information) of the Higher Education Act 2003 giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Commonwealth) and the

relevant commonwealth government department reserves the right to investigate a possible offence.

It is a recipient's responsibility to inform the Scholarships Office immediately of any overpayment or underpayment. The Scholarships Office advises the process of returning any overpayment.

Overpayments are to be returned immediately. In extenuating circumstances, a payment plan may be approved by the Scholarships Office.

Underpayments are to be rectified by the Scholarships Office in the pay period following the notification.

#### **4.2 Patience Thoms First Peoples (Honours and Postgraduate) Scholarship**

The Patience Thoms Scholarships are valued at \$4,000. Half the value of the scholarship is made available/paid in Trimester 1 and 2 in which the recipient is enrolled. Part-time recipients will have up to a total value of \$1,000 per trimester made available, reflecting their part-time status.

Eligible students will be paid within six weeks of the census date in Trimester 1 and Trimester 2 subject to the student maintaining ongoing eligibility requirements.

A student must nominate their financial institution details for the deposit of their scholarship entitlement. Scholarship entitlement paid into a student's nominated account is deemed to have been paid directly to the student.

The scholarships are only available for a period of two payments, after which the recipient will have to re-apply. This is regardless of whether the recipient was a full-time or part-time student.

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## **5. CONDITIONS**

The following conditions apply for the award of a scholarship and its continued payment throughout the bachelor degree:

- Successful applicants are officially notified in writing of the outcome of their applications.
- A scholarship recipient must accept their admission offer from Griffith University and accept the scholarship by the date indicated on the letter of offer, or the scholarship offer will be withdrawn and directed to another applicant.
- A scholarship recipient must enrol and maintain enrolment as a full-time student, at the census date for the trimester to which the benefit applies. In exceptional circumstances, a scholarship benefit may be provided to a part-time student on approval by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic). The University will take into account factors such as membership of equity target groups, requirement to undertake employment to maintain financial solvency, the impact of disability and/or significant carer responsibilities in determining whether scholarship benefits will be maintained for part-study. Scholarship recipients who are approved to study part-time will undertake a minimum of 20 credit points per trimester. The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) may approve variations.
- A scholarship recipient must remain in good academic standing in accordance with the Academic Standing, Progression and Exclusion policy. A recipient excluded from study under any University policy, loses their scholarship.
- A scholarship recipient may be required to provide documentation to satisfy the requirements of the scholarship, each trimester, in order to maintain their scholarship.
- A scholarship recipient may take leave of absence in accordance with University policy. The maximum period of approved leave which a scholarship recipient may take without losing their scholarship is twelve consecutive months.
- A scholarship recipient who is not enrolled and is not on approved leave of absence loses their scholarship.
- Scholarship recipients who are on approved cross-institutional study continue to remain eligible for scholarship benefits. Scholarship recipients are required to provide documentation to prove cross-institutional study and academic load.

- A scholarship recipient may change their degree program and/or participate in a Bachelor Honours Degree program.
  - Where the duration of the scholarship benefit has not exceeded the maximum number of payments, the scholarship recipient may use the balance of the scholarship for a Bachelor Honours Degree program.
  - Should the University know or have reason to believe that a student in receipt of a Commonwealth Scholarship has provided false or misleading information, their application is reassessed and, where appropriate, the Commonwealth Government advised of the outcome. Refer Student Misconduct Policy.
  - Scholarship recipients in their final trimester of study with less than a full-time study load remain eligible for scholarship benefits.
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## 6. REVIEW AND APPEALS

The decision by the University made in respect of an application for a scholarship is final and is not reviewable under the University's *Student Review and Appeals Policy*.

A scholarship recipient whose scholarship is terminated for not complying with one or more conditions set out in section 5 and whose scholarship benefits are not continued may request a review of the decision.

A request for a review of a decision to terminate the scholarship should specify the grounds in writing using the *Review of Decision Form*, attaching copies of all documents relevant to the decision and lodging their request for a review of the decision with the Scholarships Office within 10 working days of notification of the decision for forwarding to the Academic Registrar. The Academic Registrar reviews the decision and provides the applicant with the reason for the decision. If an error has been made, it will be corrected at the first available opportunity. As specified in the *Student Review and Appeals Policy*, the Academic Registrar's decision is final.

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