

Aboriginal Tertiary Scholarship Program Guidelines

Department of Justice and Community Safety

People and Culture



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1. Introduction

The Aboriginal Tertiary Scholarship Program (the program) enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for financial support to actively continue their accredited study.

The program is a key component of the Department of Justice and Community Safety (the department) Career Development Program, aligned with Action Area 3 of the Koori Employment and Career Strategy 2017-2020 (the strategy).

Scholarship recipients will also gain access to a work placement at the department and may be eligible to apply for the Aboriginal Graduate Scheme.

1.1 General information

The program aims to achieve a long-term increase in the number of qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed across all areas and all levels of department and related agencies.

The department will offer a limited number of scholarships each year in the amount of either \$10,000 or \$30,000 annually under the program.

The department is targeting justice related fields of study which may include:

- law
- criminology, criminal studies
- para-legal
- psychology
- social/youth work
- media and communications
- information technology
- finance
- HR
- business, commerce
- other areas of study related to the department.

Scholarships will be awarded based on the needs and commitment of the applicant, taking into account an applicant's eligibility, past academic results, ability to complete course of study and benefits gained from the scholarship.

Successful scholarship recipients will receive a fortnightly study allowance to study full-time for a period of 12 months of an undergraduate or postgraduate course.

Successful scholarship recipients may be eligible to reapply over consecutive years should they continue to meet eligibility requirements.

To ensure equity and accessibility to the fund all applications will be assessed by the People and Culture scholarship selection panel (the selection panel).

2. Scholarship categories

The program will provide annual scholarships as follows:

- \$30,000 each for two candidates as assessed by the selection panel as suitable for the major scholarships.
- \$10,000 each for two candidates as assessed by the selection panel for the minor scholarships.

2.1 Disclaimers

All scholarship funds are paid directly to the successful recipients. Any Higher Education Loan Program (FEE - HELP) payments associated with a recipient's study must be made by the individual and will not be paid directly by the department.

The department reserves the right to vary the number and value of scholarships at any time.

3. Eligibility

To be eligible for a scholarship applicants must meet the following criteria:

3.1.1 Residency

Have resided in the state of Victoria on a full-time basis for a minimum of three years immediately preceding lodgement of the application. Residency details are requested on the application form.

3.1.2 Aboriginality

Be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person who:

- identifies as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- is accepted by the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community in which she/he lives or has lived
- have completed the Statutory Declaration of Aboriginality form before an authorised witness (form attached).

3.1.3 Study requirements

Be undertaking full-time studies at an education institution and:

- have successfully completed the first year of an undergraduate degree course in the discipline for which the application is being made, or
- have successfully gained entry into a postgraduate course for which the scholarship application is being made, or
- have successfully completed the first year of an accredited online undergraduate/post graduate course. Applicants are required to provide details of your course of study and must meet the other eligibility criteria as stated in the guidelines.

3.1.4 Study requirements: undergraduate and postgraduate level

To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must be undertaking an undergraduate or postgraduate course at full-time workload as determined by the institute at which they are studying and provide written confirmation of their full-time workload status.

3.1.5 Academic results

Past academic results will be considered in assessing an applicant's ability to complete their course of study within the duration of the proposed scholarship.

Undergraduate applicants must have successfully completed a full-time workload of all units of study within one year in the previous three years in the discipline for which a scholarship is being sought.

Postgraduate applicants must have successfully gained entry into a postgraduate course to be eligible for a scholarship.

3.1.6 Overseas and interstate study

Applications for overseas and interstate study will not be considered for the scholarship. However, applications may be considered from students undertaking short-term study interstate or overseas, such as study tours and student exchanges as part of their course curriculum.

In such instances, the applicant will need to demonstrate in their application why the study cannot be undertaken in Victoria.

3.2 Persons ineligible for the scholarship

Persons deemed ineligible to receive the scholarship will be those who are:

- currently completing a sentence through non-custodial means
- on parole
- on bail or on remand in custody
- in lawful custody for committing an offence
- in a youth training centre as defined under the Children and Young Persons Act 1989, or imprisoned in an adult correctional facility within Australia
- not residing in Victoria, even when completing an online education with a Victorian university.

Shortlisted applicants for the program will be required to complete the department's security screening (criminal record check).

4. Scholarship requirements

Scholarship recipients will be required to:

- perform to a satisfactory standard throughout the duration of the scholarship for both the academic and work placement, if undertaken
- provide proof of continued enrolment at the educational institution and in the course of study throughout each semester. Such documentation is to be endorsed by the educational institution
- provide copies of results at the end of each semester to the Scholarship Contact Officer
- provide their Tax File Number to the department's Scholarship Contact Officer
- provide the Scholarship Contact Officer with information on their progress, or any plans to vary their study
- provide the Scholarship Contact Officer in writing, within fourteen days, of any change to your study workload, employment status or contact details.

4.1 Academic requirements

A scholarship recipient is required to complete the proposed units of study within the duration of the scholarship. Failure in any subject in any semester could result in the scholarship being cancelled and additional assistance to complete an extended course of study is unlikely to be approved.

4.2 Academic reference

Each applicant is required to provide, as part of their application, a written academic reference from a nominated referee who can provide an appraisal of their academic performance and ability.

5. Work placement

Scholarship recipients will be encouraged to participate in a practical work placement within the department or its related agencies.

Work placements may take place during the semester break or between the end of one academic year, to the commencement of the next academic year. The duration of the work placement will be negotiable between the scholarship recipient and the Scholarship Contact Officer.

Some placements may be subject to a Working with Children Check.

If a work placement is undertaken, scholarship recipients will be encouraged to have a recreational break prior to their return to study

At the completion of the scholarship the department's Aboriginal Employment Team may support participants in applying for the department's Aboriginal Graduate Scheme or assist with providing information about other career options within the department.

Please note the department offers no guarantee of employment at the end of the scholarship.

6. Scholarship placement

Successful scholarship recipients will be paid on a fortnightly basis for the duration of the scholarship, commencing on the nearest departmental pay date, usually within two weeks from the signing of the scholarship contract by both parties.

6.1 ABSTUDY

It is the responsibility of each scholarship holder in receipt of ABSTUDY (or any other like payment) to advise Centrelink that they have been successful in securing a scholarship.

Any ongoing ABSTUDY liabilities or benefits available to the scholarship holder are for Centrelink to assess. For further information, please contact the Centrelink Indigenous contact centre on 1800 136 380.

6.2 Taxation

The Department of Justice and Community Safety cannot advise scholarship applicants on tax matters. Successful recipients of the scholarship must seek independent advice from a tax professional.

For information regarding tax and your scholarship, please use the following links:

- Information about whether your scholarship is considered income by Centrelink can be found on the [Australian Government's Guide to Social Security Law](#).
- To help you work out if your scholarship is taxable by the Australian Tax Office (ATO) you can use their [Is your scholarship taxable?](#) tool.

7. How to apply

7.1 Application form

Download the application form at:

www.justice.vic.gov.au/careers/aboriginal-tertiary-scholarships-program

All applications must be submitted on the official Department of Justice and Community Safety, Aboriginal Tertiary Scholarships Program application form.

Refer to the webpage for closing dates for applications.

Please contact the department's Scholarship Contact Officer via telephone:

(03) 8684 1751

7.2 Stage one: Submit your application

To apply:

- complete the application form and attach all required information
- submit your application via email to aboriginal.employment@justice.vic.gov.au before 5pm on the closing date.

7.3 Stage two: Application assessment

Scholarships applications are assessed by the scholarship selection panel and ranked according to the eligibility criteria outlined in the Aboriginal Tertiary Scholarship Program Guidelines.

Applications will be short-listed and at this stage you may be requested by the selection panel to supply further information to support your application.

Applications will only be assessed on the information and documentation provided.

It will be the responsibility of the applicant to advise the Scholarship Contact Officer, as soon as it is known, if they receive an additional offer of financial assistance through a study scholarship or similar program after lodgement of their application.

The selection of scholarship recipients will be assessed on:

- the competitiveness of the applicant against other applicants;
- satisfying the eligibility criteria; and
- the competitiveness of applicants taking into account their actual course of study and how it relates to the justice system.

The scholarship will be awarded on the basis of merit, taking into account overall course relevance, previous academic performance, the capacity of applicants to successfully complete their studies and the stated aspirations of applicants concerning justice outcomes.

7.4 Stage three: Interview

Short listed applicants will be invited to attend an interview to discuss their application in further detail.

7.5 Stage four: Notification

Successful applicants will be notified by email or phone within 10-15 business days from being shortlisted and will be sent a formal notification of the outcome of their application.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email.

Unsuccessful applicants will be eligible to re-apply for the scholarship in future rounds and are encouraged to seek feedback and support from the selection panel.