

Risk and Safeguarding Manager, New Colombo Plan Program Support Unit

Expected Start Date	August 2026	Expected End Date	June 2029
Duration	Three years	Location	Adelaide, Brisbane or Canberra preferred
Reports To	Deputy Team Leader (Program Enabling)	Classification	Grade 15

Palladium is a global development and consulting firm, part of the GSI Consulting Group, working alongside some of the world's leading project management and engineering organisations. We partner with governments, businesses, investors and communities to design and deliver complex programs that create lasting impact. With a presence across more than 90 countries, Palladium offers the opportunity to work on meaningful challenges, alongside talented colleagues, in environments where your work can truly make a difference.

Program overview

The New Colombo Plan (NCP) plays a key role in supporting the Australian Government's objectives in building Asia capability. It aims to lift the Indo-Pacific capability and Asia literacy in Australia by supporting Australian undergraduates to undertake study, language learning and internships in the Indo-Pacific.

NCP alumni contribute their Indo-Pacific capability and Asia literacy to Australia's enduring engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. This is achieved through three complementary grants programs: the Scholarship Program, Mobility Program and Semester Program.

The NCP is administered by Palladium on behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) via the Program Support Unit (PSU) under the Australia Awards Global Support Mechanism (AAGSM). The AAGSM provides operational and technical support services to DFAT's International Education and Scholarships Branch, with two End of Investment Outcomes (EOIOs):

- EOIO 1 - Operational Support: High quality and efficient administrative and standard business support services provided to DFAT.
- EOIO 2: Technical Support: High quality, coherent, consistent and fit for purpose technical support services that also promote gender equality, disability and social inclusion outcomes throughout DFAT's international scholarship programs network.

The NCP PSU supports DFAT's New Colombo Plan Secretariat (NCS) with high-quality grant administration and management consistent with the Commonwealth Grant Rules and Principles. Support service delivery includes end-to-end grants cycle and funds management, as well as technical support in Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), alumni engagement, communications, events management, business sector engagement and risk management.

Purpose of position

The purpose of the Risk and Safeguarding Manager is to establish and mature a cross-cutting risk, safety and safeguarding function within the NCP PSU. The role will provide broader risk leadership across the program, not only safeguarding and incident management, by helping the PSU identify, manage and learn from enterprise, operational, safety, psychosocial, compliance and stakeholder risks. The Manager will lead the development and implementation of a Risk and Safeguards Management Plan and supporting risk architecture across all NCP programs and support functions, operationalising requirements in NCP

Guidelines and grant agreements through guidance, tiered tools and templates, escalation thresholds, incident response protocols, training, assurance mechanisms and continuous learning processes. The role will support early risk identification and practical risk decision-making as the program grows in scale and complexity, including increased scholarship numbers and semester-length experiences.

Primary responsibilities

Program delivery and performance

- Drive risk management-related operational and assurance reforms across the NCP, including critical incident response systems, escalation thresholds, risk assessment tools and processes across the Scholarship, Semester and Mobility programs.
- Lead a broader enterprise and operational risk management agenda across the PSU, including staff capability, systems and process controls, delivery continuity, stakeholder management, privacy, fraud and compliance risks, and other emerging program risks.
- Develop and maintain practical risk principles, role and decision-rights mapping, and threshold guidance to clarify how risk is shared and managed across DFAT, the PSU, universities, scholars, students and host organisations.
- Review and improve risk assessment templates, guidance and other tools so they are proportionate, program-specific, user friendly and aligned with NCP Guidelines and legal agreements with partners.
- Develop and maintain risk, safety and safeguarding systems, policies, tools and templates underpinned by the Risk and Safeguards Management Plan, including incident registers, risk categories, escalation models and assurance products that support trend analysis and learning.
- Establish clear escalation pathways and incident response protocols in line with relevant DFAT policies, WHS obligations, the Insurance Handbook and insurance policies, PSEAH and child protection standards and frameworks, privacy and information management requirements, and home university obligations.
- Lead the review of risk management practices across all NCP programs, particularly the Scholarship Program, and promote best practice for the Semester and Mobility programs.
- Implement safeguarding and serious incident response, investigations and management responses accordance with DFAT reporting protocols and victim-survivor centred principles.
- Lead and implement content updates to NCP's online training modules which relate to risk and safeguarding, reflecting DFAT policy requirements and best practice.

DFAT stakeholder and engagement

- Act as the primary strategic contact person with DFAT on risk, safety and safeguarding for the NCP.
- Under the direction of the NCS, establish and coordinate a safety and risk reference or consultative body comprising key NCP stakeholders, including university International Liaison Officers and, where appropriate, other delivery partners, alumni representatives or specialist advisers, to interpret risk trends, share lessons and support consistent practice.
- Develop and deliver a risk literacy and judgment training program for International Liaison Officers, PSU staff and NCS staff, with program-specific modules on roles and responsibilities, NCP risk management and safeguarding protocols, psychosocial risk, threshold escalation and critical incident response.
- Support the development of streamlined training and guidance for scholars and students, including clear student-facing resources on safe travel responsibilities, escalation contacts, reporting pathways and when to seek assistance.

Team leadership and management

- Lead change management for risk, safety and security practices, supporting program leads across the PSU to mainstream risk management into day-to-day delivery, grant documentation and legal agreements, communications, risk assessment processes, standard operating procedures and decision-making.
- Develop the capability of staff to support full integration of the Risk, Safety and Safeguarding function into program delivery and operations, including by upskilling staff, building a stronger risk

culture, supporting psychosocial risk awareness, and improving confidence to identify, raise and manage emerging risks early.

- Work across the PSU and NCS to maintain and align NCP risk registers and related assurance products, ensuring they accurately reflect current and emerging risks, complement NCS program-level risk registers and annual Self-Assessed Risk Analysis processes, and support escalation of risks requiring further oversight and management.
- Lead or support critical incident responses by coordinating across NCS, the PSU, the Scholarships team, universities, specialist providers, emergency assistance and insurance providers, and scholars or students as appropriate, in accordance with agreed protocols so that communication lines, roles and responsibilities are clear; incident responses may need to be escalated out of hours.

Reporting, monitoring and continuous improvement

- Develop the Risk and Safeguards Management Plan, maintain its currency through annual and event-driven reviews, and ensure critical deliverables are integrated into the NCP Annual Work Plan and relevant transition, inception and 2027 round planning processes.
- Regularly review NCP's suite of policies, protocols and procedures to ensure they remain current, practical and aligned with DFAT policies, NCP Guidelines, the Insurance Handbook, grant agreements, risk review recommendations and lessons from incidents or near misses.
- Maintain accurate records and data to support trend analysis, assurance, client reporting and continuous improvement, including Key Risk Indicators, After Action Reviews, local adaptations registers, quarterly learning briefs and dashboards where appropriate.

Other Responsibilities

- Comply with and promote DFAT policies across all aspects of implementation, including probity, privacy, confidential information, conflicts of interest, foreign influence, data security, Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), safeguarding, fraud and anti-corruption, Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) and child protection.
- Engage in relevant Palladium corporate, AAGSM and Australia Awards initiatives and development opportunities to ensure consistency with Palladium approaches and practices, share lessons and best practice on common risks, and maintain compliance with systems and processes.
- Perform other duties as reasonably required by the Senior Leadership team or DFAT, consistent with the role and experience.
- Undertake domestic travel as required.

Delivery principles

- One Team – committed to the One Team approach to achieving EOIOs, modelling intentional and open communication, collaboration and shared problem solving, strength in differences and a learning culture.
- Client focused delivery – provide leadership to ensure provision of sophisticated services which are client, solutions and outcomes focused.
- Flexible and responsive – provide leadership to embed a flexible and responsive approach to service delivery, responding to evolving priorities and focusing on continuous improvement, proactively identifying opportunities for improved quality, efficiency and outcomes.
- Ethics and Integrity - operate with high levels of integrity, consistent with the intent of DFAT's Ethics, Integrity and Professional Standards Policy Manual.

Relationships and accountability

The position of Risk and Safeguarding Manager will report into the Deputy Team Leader (Program Enabling). The role will:

- Work closely with the DFAT NCP Secretariat (NCS) and maintain professional and solutions focused relationships with NCS.

- In accordance with NCS direction, engage with universities and other stakeholders, including through the Scholarships team where scholar-related issues are involved, clearly communicating NCP policy objectives, program intent, risk responsibilities and escalation expectations to support shared understanding and quality outcomes.
- Effectively collaborate with AAGSM Advisers including the Psychosocial and Wellbeing Support Adviser to ensure psychosocial interventions are incorporated into NCP policies and practices.
- Act as the NCP Safeguarding Focal Point and participate in the Palladium Safeguarding Community of Practice.

Qualifications, capabilities and experience required

- Tertiary qualification or demonstrated experience in risk management or a related discipline.
- Minimum five years' experience in risk, safety, safeguarding, critical incident management or emergency management roles within complex operating environments, preferably including international, education, development or remote-context programs.
- Demonstrated experience building organisational risk capability, strengthening risk culture, and translating complex policy requirements into practical guidance, tools, training and assurance processes.
- Experience supporting donor-funded, international education or international development programs.
- Proven capability in change management and in identifying and implementing systems and process improvements for improved efficiency and outcomes.
- High level stakeholder engagement and communication skills, with the ability to work effectively with senior government clients.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Demonstrated ability to use incident data, risk registers, assurance findings and stakeholder feedback to identify trends, improve controls and support evidence-based decision-making.
- Clear, confident written and verbal communication.
- High cultural awareness and commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Core capabilities

Palladium's Core Capability Framework for APAC Projects outlines the standard of performance and behaviours expected at each level within the organisation.

It is recommended that all employees are familiar with the capabilities expected of them at their level as the framework will be utilised to optimise performance.

Approval

Reviewed by:		Date:	
Approved by:		Effective date:	