

Manager, Semester & Mobility, New Colombo Plan Program Support Unit

Expected Start Date	July 2026	Expected End Date	30 June 2029
Duration	Till June 2029	Location	Adelaide preferred
Reports To	Deputy Team Leader (Program Delivery)	Classification	Manager, level 16

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 Manager, Semester and Mobility is responsible for the effective end-to-end operational delivery of the NCP Semester and Mobility Programs. The role ensures both programs are implemented consistently, on time, and to a high standard of quality and compliance, in line with NCP policy priorities.

Operating within the Program Delivery team and reporting to the Deputy Team Leader (Program Delivery), the Manager provides operational leadership to coordinate staff, oversees application and assessment processes, drives continuous improvement (particularly in relation to assessment quality), and ensures continuity of delivery across program rounds.

The role plays a critical part in strengthening delivery resilience, embedding lessons learned from previous rounds, and supporting the evolution of the Semester and Mobility Programs as part of the broader NCP reform agenda.

Primary responsibilities

Program delivery and performance

- Lead the day-to-day delivery of the Semester and Mobility Programs across the full program lifecycle, inclusive of required milestones, including reporting, variations and unspent funding return, ensuring delivery aligns with approved timelines, program guidelines, contractual requirements and quality standards.
- Manage all necessary arrangements of the respective Semester and Mobility annual application and selection rounds, including application enquiries, eligibility, selection, awards, funding agreements and funds distribution; engage contractors during this process in collaboration with the Scholarships team.
- Ensure assessment processes are consistent, transparent and well moderated, with clear decision-making pathways.
- Oversee funds management, particularly unspent mobility and semester funding amounts held by universities and support universities to understand and comply with processes for the return of unspent funding to DFAT in accordance with Commonwealth Grant Guidelines and Principles.
- Prepare and keep updated standard operating procedures and operational manuals for the Semester and Mobility Programs, in line with NCP PSU governance arrangements.

Stakeholder engagement

- Maintain clear and timely communication with Australian universities, particularly International Liaison Officers, throughout the annual selection process, and the project lifecycle from award to reporting and acquittal.
- In collaboration with DFAT and in line with probity requirements, communicate guideline requirements, priority areas for selection, and timeframes clearly and in alignment with DFAT NCP policy priorities; and to promote the NCP more generally.
- In collaboration with the Outreach and Alumni team, contribute to the development and delivery of high-quality communication, events, and promotional activities specific to key Mobility and Semester lifecycle events, and contribute to the development of communications products on mobility projects including case studies, interview and stories.

Team management

- Provide day-to-day leadership and management of the Senior Coordinator and Coordinator, including task allocation and monitoring, policy advice and interpretation, workload planning, quality assurance and capability development to meet performance expectations.

Risk and safeguarding

- Contribute to the implementation of the recent risk review recommendations by ensuring all Semester and Mobility documentation and standard operating procedures are reviewed to address current and emerging program risks.
- Working with the Risk Manager, monitor submission of and conduct project risk management documentation reviews for a designated sample of all Semester and Mobility projects being delivered, providing feedback to universities for improvement.
- Monitor university compliance with mandatory student eLearning module requirements, including the escalation of issues of non-compliance.
- Identify and manage delivery risks and emerging issues, escalating as required through established incident management protocols.
- Monitor and respond to Smartraveller changes in travel advice for Program host locations, and respond to potential risk events and critical incidents, liaising with senior leadership in line with the contract protocols (including outside of work hours, as required).

Reporting, monitoring and continuous improvement

- Contribute to ongoing technological improvements, transitioning to systems and processes that underpin the NCP Semester and Mobility selection function, with a focus on efficiency, continuity, risk management and stakeholder experience.
- Provide input to policy, program compliance and monitoring activities, including compliance with the Semester and Mobility Agreements and Guidelines.
- Oversee delivery of statistics reports for each stage of the selection process and outcomes reports and deliver the annual Grant Management Report for each round, incorporating lessons learnt and recommendations for future rounds.
- Oversee and deliver all weekly, monthly and annual, as well as ad-hoc, reporting and statistics relating to the NCP Semester and Mobility programs.
- Contribute to other contractual and operational reporting requirements and respond promptly to requests for information from the Senior Leadership Team and NCS, including on critical incidents, as necessary.

Other Responsibilities

- Comply with and promote DFAT policies across all aspects of implementation, including Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), safeguarding, fraud and anti-corruption, Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH), child protection, and environmental and social safeguards.
- Engage in relevant Palladium corporate initiatives and development opportunities, to ensure consistency with Palladium approaches and practices, and 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 local 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.
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Relationships and accountability

The position of Manager, Semester and Mobility will report into the Deputy Team Leader (Program Delivery). The role will:

- Engage regularly with the NCP Secretariat in weekly operational meetings and propose clear, timely and pragmatic system-level solutions to improve program performance and mitigate risks.
- Ensure effective collaboration across the NCP PSU and AAGSU to maximise efficiencies and coherence.
- Lead, motivate and develop Semester and Mobility team, set clear expectations and accountabilities, fostering a client focused, high-performance culture of continuous service delivery improvement.
- In accordance with NCS direction, engage with universities and the broader delivery network, clearly communicating NCP policy objectives, program intent and changes to support shared understanding and quality outcomes.
- The role carries a moderate degree of autonomy and is required to manage budgets and teams.

Qualifications, capabilities and experience required

- Relevant tertiary qualification in a field such as public policy, international relations, education, international development, business administration or a related discipline; **or**
- Experience delivering grant, scholarship, mobility or education programs, preferably in a government-funded or higher education context.
- Experience supporting application, assessment and selection processes with a focus on quality and consistency.
- Demonstrated ability to coordinate teams or workstreams and manage high-volume, time-critical activities.
- Understanding of compliance, governance and risk considerations in program delivery environments.
- Demonstrated excellence in client, particularly DFAT, management and stakeholder engagement to maintain engaged and productive relationships.
- Excellent interpersonal and social skills including cross-cultural experience and communication skills, business writing skills and the ability to influence a wide range of stakeholders.

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:	