

# Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarships

## Information for Applicants

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from low socio-economic status backgrounds face particular challenges in meeting their education costs. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are supported through the Commonwealth Scholarships Program in recognition of the special needs of this group.

## Types of Scholarships:

	<b>Commonwealth Education Cost Scholarship (CECS) – Indigenous Enabling and Ordinary</b>	<b>Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship (CAS) – Indigenous Enabling and Ordinary</b>	<b>Indigenous Access Scholarship (IAS)</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	To assist both metropolitan and rural or regional Indigenous students who can show low socio-economic status with general education costs.	To assist Indigenous students with accommodation costs incurred by moving from a rural or regional area to undertake study at the University of Newcastle	To assist Indigenous students to undertake an undergraduate course at the University of Newcastle.
<b>Value in 2013</b>	\$2,469 (per annum)	\$4,939 (per annum)	\$4,659 (one off payment)
<b>Payment</b>	Two equal payments after census dates in Semester 1 & Semester 2 each year for a maximum of two payment periods for enabling and eight payment periods for undergraduate.	Two equal payments after census dates in Semester 1 & Semester 2 each year for a maximum of two payment periods for enabling and eight payment periods for undergraduate.	One off payment made shortly after Semester 1 census date
<b>No. of Scholarships Available</b>	Ordinary 40 Enabling 50	Ordinary 10 Enabling 25	IAS 70

If you meet the eligibility requirements for more than one of the above Commonwealth Indigenous Scholarships it may be possible to be awarded more than one scholarship. We will assess your application for eligibility – so you do not need to decide which scholarship you want to apply for.

## How to apply

The application form is available here

[http://www.newcastle.edu.au/Resources/Institutes/Wollotuka/Indigenous%20students/ICS\\_ApplicationForm2013.pdf](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/Resources/Institutes/Wollotuka/Indigenous%20students/ICS_ApplicationForm2013.pdf)

Please send your completed application form with your response to the above selection criteria (Including written evidence/confirmations/certified copies of documents) to:

The Scholarships Officer  
The Wollotuka Institute  
SAS1-17  
Birabahn  
Callaghan Campus  
University Drive  
Callaghan NSW 2308

Or by scanned email to: [Leanne.Ah-See@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Leanne.Ah-See@newcastle.edu.au) OR fax to 02 4921 6985

## Basic Eligibility Requirements for Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarships

You must meet all of the following requirements by the first census date of the scholarship period.

Conditions	Requirements
Citizenship and residency	You must be: an Australian citizen,  and be an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.
Enrolment	You must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enrolled, or about to commence study, in:the YAPUG, Open Foundation and NewStep program; or</li> <li>an undergraduate course of study; and</li> <li>enrolled as a Commonwealth-supported student for that course of study; and</li> <li>enrolled full time (see 'Study Load' below for exceptions)</li> </ul> <p><i>To be awarded an Accommodation costs scholarship the student must be studying at least 75% of their units on campus.</i></p>
Low socio-economic status requirements	You must demonstrate financial hardship either by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>receiving a Centrelink (or other Commonwealth) means-tested income support payment (such as Austudy, ABSTUDY, Youth Allowance etc), or</li> <li>by providing comprehensive information demonstrating exceptional financial hardship through the completion of a Financial Hardship Statement available here <a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/Resources/Institutes/Wollotuka/Indigenous%20students/ICS_BudgetForm2013.pdf">http://www.newcastle.edu.au/Resources/Institutes/Wollotuka/Indigenous%20students/ICS_BudgetForm2013.pdf</a></li> </ul>
Study load	You must be enrolled or about to commence study as a full time student. <i>(Full time study at the University of Newcastle is equivalent to a minimum of 30 credit points per semester).</i>  Students studying in the YAPUG, Open Foundation or NewStep program can study part time and be eligible for a Commonwealth Indigenous Enabling Scholarship.  Part time study will also be considered for other applicants if you can provide details and evidence of <b>exceptional circumstances</b> that prevent you from studying full time, such as disability, illness, or significant Carer responsibilities.
Previous qualifications	You must <b>not</b> have completed the requirements of a course of study equivalent to or higher than an Australian bachelor's degree, unless the award is a prerequisite to your current undergraduate course of study.  Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarships are intended primarily for students undertaking an initial qualification.
Previous Benefit from Commonwealth Scholarships	You must advise the University if you have received Commonwealth Scholarship funds from another University.  You are unable to claim the enabling benefit for a second time, and you are not to exceed the maximum payments allowable under the ordinary CECS & CAS allocation rules.  <b>Enabling:</b> A maximum of TWO semester periods only an enabling student can hold the Commonwealth Scholarship.  <b>Undergraduate:</b> A maximum of EIGHT semester periods only and undergraduate student to hold the Commonwealth Scholarships.

## **Proof of Australian Indigenous Status**

Students identifying as an Australian Indigenous person in their application must provide documentary evidence of their Aboriginality or Torres Strait Islander status. Examples of evidence are:-

- Confirmation of Aboriginality (Common Seal)
- Letter of Confirmation from a Local Aboriginal Lands Council OR
- Family Tree demonstrating Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent which is supported with documentation i.e. birth certificates, photo's etc

Further Information can be found at:

NSWALC

<http://www.alc.org.au/land-councils/confirmation-of-aboriginality.aspx>

AIATSIS

<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/fhu/aboriginality.html>

## **Closing Date**

Applications for the Semester 1, 2013 Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarships must be submitted by **3 pm, Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013**. ***We cannot accept late applications.***

### **Additional Eligibility Requirements for CAS – Indigenous Enabling and Ordinary**

In addition to the basic eligibility requirements, applicants for a CAS – Indigenous Enabling and Ordinary must satisfy **each** of the following:

Within the four years immediately preceding the commencement of higher education study, you:

1. have lived in rural or regional Australia for at least three years; or
  - Completed the final two years of schooling in a high school or college in a rural or regional area; or
  - Moved away from a rural or regional area to complete the final two years of schooling at a high school or college in a major city;
  - It was, or will be necessary for you to move from the rural or regional area to undertake your higher education study;
2. have incurred, or will incur, additional accommodation costs as a result of having to move.
3. will be enrolled as an internal student at the University of Newcastle, unless you can demonstrate exceptional circumstances that prevent you from doing so.

To apply for a Commonwealth Accommodation Costs Scholarship you need to provide details of your residential addresses and/or high school or college attended for the four years immediately preceding your commencement of higher education study.

You will also need to provide documentary evidence of the residential details provided in your application for your application for a CAS to be considered. Documentary evidence can be things such as electricity bills, bank statements or Centrelink statement.

### **Eligibility Requirements for IAS**

The Indigenous Access Scholarship is to assist commencing Indigenous students. To be eligible for an IAS in 2013 you must meet the following additional requirements:

- be a commencing student, and:
1. have accepted the offer of a place in or are enrolled in an undergraduate course of study as a Commonwealth supported student at the University of Newcastle.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why are Commonwealth Scholarships only available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students?**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from low socio-economic status backgrounds face particular challenges in meeting their education costs. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are supported through the Commonwealth Scholarships Program in recognition of the special needs of this group.

### **Can I have an Indigenous Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship and a Student Start-up Scholarship?**

Both these scholarships are intended to meet the up-front costs of study. Eligible students may only receive either the Indigenous Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship or the Student Start-up Scholarship.

### **Can I have an Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship with a Relocation Scholarship?**

Both these scholarships are intended to support students who have to move to study. Eligible students may only receive either the Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship or the Relocation Scholarship.

### **When my Commonwealth Scholarships expire, can I get a Relocation or Student Start-up Scholarship?**

Centrelink is responsible for deciding if students are eligible for a Relocation and/or Student Start-up scholarship. Students may apply for these through Centrelink only after the expiry of their Commonwealth Scholarship which is equal to eight payments. This also will apply if you move to another university as a Commonwealth Scholarship cannot be transferred with you to your new institution.

### **If I am a part time student can I get a Commonwealth Scholarship?**

A student must, in general, be studying full time in order to receive a Commonwealth Scholarship, unless there are exceptional circumstances which prevent the student from studying full time. A decision that a student cannot study full time due to exceptional circumstances is made by your university. You should contact the scholarships office at Wollotuka Institute to find out what assistance is available.

### **If I am on a Disability Support Pension can I get a Commonwealth Scholarship, Relocation or a Student Start-up Scholarship?**

You may be eligible for a Commonwealth Scholarship if you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and should approach the scholarships office at your university if you wish to apply.

You will not be eligible for a Student Start-up or Relocation. Students in receipt of a Disability Support Pension receive other income support, such as the Pensioner Education Supplement, to assist in training or education.

Further information is available from Centrelink by phoning 13 24 90.

### **If I am on a Parenting Payment can I get a Commonwealth Scholarship, Relocation or a Student Start-up Scholarship?**

You may be eligible for a Commonwealth Scholarship if you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and should approach the scholarships office at your university if you wish to apply.

You will not be eligible for a Student Start-up or Relocation. Students in receipt of a Parenting Payment receive other income support, such as the Pensioner Education Supplement, to assist in training or education. Further information is available from Centrelink by phoning 13 24 90.

**I have an Indigenous Access Scholarship (IAS), why do I not also have an Indigenous Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship (ICECS) or an Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship (ICAS) too?**

Universities are only given a certain number of Commonwealth Scholarships within a capped system. If you have not been awarded one type of Commonwealth scholarship, your university will refer you to Centrelink to discuss your entitlement for the Relocation and/or Student Start-up Scholarship. You may need to take a letter from your university scholarships office to let Centrelink know you are not receiving a Commonwealth Scholarship.

**I was awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship before the changes in 2010? Do I still get my payments?**

Yes. The Department will continue to provide funding for your scholarship, provided you maintain your eligibility and have not consumed your scholarship entitlement, or transferred to another university. In that case, you should contact Centrelink to discuss your entitlement for a Student Start-up Scholarship or Relocation Scholarship.

**Can I transfer my Commonwealth Scholarship if I transfer to another university?**

No. Commonwealth Scholarships cannot be transferred to another university. If you transfer to another university your Commonwealth Scholarship is automatically terminated. You may be entitled to the Relocation and/or Student Start up Scholarship and you should discuss your options with Centrelink by phoning 13 24 90.

**How long can I defer my Commonwealth Scholarship for?**

A Commonwealth Scholarship may only be deferred for a period of 12 months. This must also be approved by your university in line with their deferral policy.

**Can a student be awarded more than one Commonwealth scholarship type at a time?**

- A student can be awarded an Indigenous-CAS and an Indigenous-CECS at the same time.
- A student can be awarded an IAS and an Indigenous-CECS and/or an Indigenous CAS at the same time.
- As student can be awarded an IAS and Indigenous Enabling CECS and/or an Indigenous Enabling CAS at the same time.
- A student cannot be in receipt of any Commonwealth Scholarships from more than one provider at the same time. If you have transferred to another university, and still maintain your eligibility, you will need to re-apply for the scholarship at your new university.