



Australia Awards

Australia Awards  
Scholarships -  
Fiji  
Frequently Asked  
Questions



# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q1. The Australian Government offers a number of different scholarships, which of these are available to Fijian applicants?**

- A. In Fiji, the Australia Awards consist of the Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS) and the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships (AAPS).

**Note: This document includes only information for the Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS) – study in Australia. If you are interested in studying in Fiji, please see the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships (AAPS) FAQs.**

## Australia Awards Scholarships

**Q2. What are the Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS)?**

- A. Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS) are the long-term Australia Awards offered by the Australian Government and administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. These scholarships provide citizens of Fiji with the opportunity to obtain an **undergraduate** or **postgraduate** qualification at an Australian tertiary institution **for programs not available in Fiji**.

Some Awards will be given for specific undergraduate programs, however the majority of Awards will be offered in Postgraduate study up to Masters level. PhD Awards will **not** be offered.

**Q3. Who can apply for an Australia Awards Scholarship?**

- A. Applicants who meet the eligibility requirements. The application process is merit-based, open and competitive.

Australia Awards Scholarships are open to applicants from the Government of Fiji, public sector agencies, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations, private sector and high performing Year 13 students. Applications from women and people with disability are strongly encouraged to apply.

**Q4. What is the duration of an Australia Awards Scholarship?**

- A. Scholarships will be available for full-time study for an Australian undergraduate or postgraduate qualification for the minimum period required to complete the award through the relevant Australian university selected from participating universities (normally 3 – 4 years for undergraduate and 1 - 2 years for Masters), PhDs are **not** offered to applicants from Fiji.

**Q5. Can I study a professional qualification which includes the training period required for professional registration, e.g. medical internships, legal articles etc.?**

- A. No. This is not allowed under this scholarship.

**Q6. Can I apply to study any course I choose?**

- A. No. Priority fields of study are determined annually in line with the development needs of the country in which they are being offered. Approved fields of study and applicable sectors for Fiji are available in the [Fiji Country Profile](#).

**Q7. Can I apply to undertake a PhD?**

- A. No. Some Awards will be offered in specific undergraduate programs, however, the majority of Awards will be offered in Postgraduate study up to Masters level. **No PhD awards will be made available.**

**Q8. Can I apply for a course in Australia if it is available at a University in Fiji?**

- A. No. These scholarships provide citizens of Fiji with the opportunity to obtain an undergraduate or postgraduate qualification at an Australian tertiary institution **only** for programs **not available** in Fiji.  
If you are looking to apply to study in Fiji, you must apply for the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships.

**Q9. What are the Australia Awards Scholarships priority sectors?**

- A. Australia Awards Scholarships will be offered to individuals with the greatest potential to drive development in the following sectors:

- **Environment (including, but not limited to:** disaster risk and resilience and adaptation, climate finance/economics, conservation, meteorology, waste management, seismology, water management, environment and resource economics).
- **Agriculture, fisheries and forestry (including, but not limited to:** pathology, entomology, agricultural engineering, biosecurity, quarantine, aquaculture, fish technology, silviculture, food technology, food security and horticulture).
- **Economic growth (including, but not limited to:** transport economics, labour economics, macroeconomic policy and analysis, environmental and resource economics, labour market analysis, public finance management, macroeconomic policy and analysis, market research, marketing and public relations, project planning, monitoring and evaluation, human resources planning and management, training and development, labour law, entrepreneurship, workforce development and planning, productivity, labour and construction law).
- **Health**  
  
Clinical **(including, but not limited to:** midwifery, specialised nursing, emergency medicine, anaesthesia obstetrics and gynaecology, surgery, pathology, biomedical, allied health programs (radiology), mental health, gender and women's health, psychiatry and dermatology).  
  
Non-clinical **(including, but not limited to:** warehouse management, logistics and supply chain management, contract management, health information systems, hospital management, health administration, financial health planning, training and development, disaster management, human resources and asset management).
- **Gender equality, child protection and disability (including, but not limited to:** gender and development, speech pathology, child psychology, disability studies, child protection, interpreting, special education, aged care and community development).
- **Infrastructure (including, but not limited to:** land surveying, engineers (road, civil, electrical, environment, water etc.), chemical engineering, urban, rural and environmental planning, property and facilities management, building and construction, urban planning and development, project management, metallurgy, water supply and sanitation and landscaping).
- **Education (including, but not limited to:** career counselling, TVET education and training for teachers, learning technology, school leadership and management, flexible learning, teaching English as a second language, early childhood education, human resources management and information systems management).

- **Governance (including, but not limited to:** monitoring and evaluation, public sector reforms, workforce planning, institutional strengthening, statistics, compliance, social protection, occupational health & safety and knowledge based management).

Scholarships are not available for general management degrees, such as a Master of Business Administration.

## Applications

### Q10. When do applications open?

- A. Applications open on 1 February 2018 and close on 30 April 2018. Applications finalised after 30 April, including those started before the due date, will not be accepted.

### Q11. How can I apply for AAS?

- A. You **must** apply online through [OASIS](#). You must complete the application form, answering all relevant questions, attach **all** required documents and submit by the deadline, 30 April 2018. Applications without all required supporting documents will not be considered.

We strongly advise applicants to submit applications well before the closing date. The online application system (OASIS) experiences peak usage in the days leading up to the closing date and applicants may experience delays.

For assistance filling out the online application, visit: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/oasisapplicant-user-guide.aspx>.

### Q12. Are hardcopy applications accepted?

- A. No. All applications for AAS must be submitted online through <https://oasis.dfat.gov.au>

### Q13. When is the last day to submit the AAS application?

- A. 30 April 2018.

### Q14. What information should I read before commencing an application?

- A. Read the [Fiji Country Profile](#) carefully. Ensure you meet the eligibility requirements for Fiji and your proposed course is aligned with the priority fields of study for Fiji.

You must read the AAS Handbook available at:

<http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/aus-awards-scholarships-policy-handbook.pdf>

### Q15. Which websites should I check before applying for an Australia Awards Scholarships?

- A. The most useful sites are:

- <http://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/oasis-applicant-user-guide.aspx>
- <http://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia-awards/pages/australia-awards-scholarships.aspx>: for information on Australia Awards Scholarships
- <http://www.australiaawards.gov.au>: for information on Australia Awards
- <http://cricos.education.gov.au/>: for information on Australian universities and courses
- <https://www.border.gov.au/>: for information about visas and the Department of Home Affairs
- <http://studyinaustralia.gov.au>: for advice on studying in Australia.

**Q16. Can I choose any university?**

- A. No. Australia Awards Scholarship recipients are accepted by **most** Australian universities, but not all. A list of participating Australian universities for Intake 2018 is available at <http://cricos.education.gov.au/>.

**Q17. Are applicants required to identify an Australian university and program of study when completing an AAS application form?**

- A. Yes. You will need to identify your program of study and provide the [CRICOS code](#) for that course of study on your application form.

Applicants must research carefully before completing the application form. Once the application is submitted, course preferences cannot be changed. Should your application for an Australia Award be successful, you are expected to undertake the program of study you included in your application.

**Q18. How do I use CRICOS?**

- A. CRICOS (Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students) is a database of all universities and their course/programs in Australia available to overseas students. Search for your preferred university and course using the search options available at: <http://cricos.education.gov.au/>. There are CRICOS code numbers for both universities and courses. In the application form, you need to enter the code for the course/program.

**Q19. How do I select a suitable program of study and enter it on the application form?**

- A. It's essential that applicants carefully research before selecting courses. Visit university websites, read their handbooks and understand the course/program requirements. Once you have researched university options, visit the CRICOS website at: <http://cricos.education.gov.au/>.

In researching a study program, make sure:

- it is available for international students
- it is in line with priority sectors and fields of study outlined in the Fiji Country Profile for Intake 2019
- it will help you contribute to sustainable development in Fiji
- it aligns with your experiences and qualifications
- you meet all enrolment entry requirements, including English language and other requirements.

**Q20. What is the difference between Masters by Coursework and Masters by Research?**

- A. **Masters by Coursework** is a degree where the course consists primarily of a series of compulsory and elective subjects. A Masters by Coursework usually involves attendance at lectures, tutorials or laboratory classes, depending on the course and university. A Masters by Coursework may also contain a minor thesis or research subject in one semester.
- A. **Masters by Research** will be awarded following the completion of a major thesis, involving original research, under the supervision of a senior academic (called a supervisor). Normally there are no lectures or classes, although some Masters by Research degrees may also include one or two compulsory subjects.

**Q21. Is it possible to do a Masters by Research when I am on an Australia Awards Scholarship?**

- A. Yes, Masters by Research are allowed.

Applicants wishing to undertake a Masters by Research must investigate an appropriate supervisor. Australian higher education institutions' websites identify the institution's areas of

research strength. Applicants should supply evidence of past research undertaken and highlight outcomes.

**Q22. Do I need an acceptance offer from the institution at the time of applying?**

- A. No, however you need to be sure you meet the course requirements. The Australian Government will facilitate your placement at the institution upon confirmation of your award.

**Q23. Can the Australia Award fund my existing program of study?**

- A. No. Australia Awards do not provide support for completion of current studies.

## Eligibility

**Q24. What are the eligibility criteria for applying for an Australia Awards Scholarship?**

- A. AAS applicants must meet **all** eligibility requirements (detailed in the Australia Awards Scholarships Policy Handbook) **AND** meet **all** criteria specific for Fiji.

AAS applicants must meet the following **general criteria**:

- be a minimum of 18 years of age on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year commencing the scholarship;
- be a citizen of Fiji and be residing in and applying for the scholarship from Fiji;
- not be married, engaged to, or a de facto of a person who holds, or is eligible to hold, Australian or New Zealand citizenship or permanent residency, at any time during the application, selection or mobilisation phases (note: residents of Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau with New Zealand citizenship are eligible but must apply for a Student visa (subclass 500));
- not be a citizen of Australia, hold permanent residency in Australia or be applying for a visa to live in Australia permanently;
- not be applying for another long-term Australia Award unless they have resided outside of Australia for twice the length of the total time that they were in Australia (for example, a previous awardee who has been on an Australia Awards Scholarship in Australia for four years will not be eligible to apply for another Australia Awards Scholarship until they have resided outside Australia for eight years).
- have satisfied any specific criteria established for Fiji;
- be able to satisfy the admission requirements of the institution at which the award is to be undertaken;
- be able to satisfy all requirements of the Department of Home Affairs to hold a Student Visa; and
- Applicants must inform the Program Area of any connection or relationship to staff employed at Program Areas or with managing contractors so that the application may be properly and transparently managed;

AAS applicants must also meet the following **Fiji specific criteria**:

***For Bachelors level study:***

- program of study must not be available locally
- must be a minimum of 18 years of age on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year commencing the scholarship
- must have completed Year 12 Certificate Examination with a minimum aggregate mark of 300 out of 400 or its equivalent (including English and three best subjects)
- must have completed Year 13 Certificate Examination with a minimum aggregate mark of 300 out of 400 or its equivalent (including English and three best subjects)

- mature age applicants who have completed a tertiary qualification, should have minimum 5 years' relevant work experience
- mature age applicants who have not completed a tertiary qualification but have extensive years of relevant work experience, must have achieved pass grades at least in either the Year 12 or Year 13 or equivalent results and/or have successfully undertaken some form of relevant tertiary studies either through tertiary institutions or work-related training
- must not hold an equivalent qualification (e.g. degree) or higher qualification (e.g. Masters) either at time of application or commencement of award
- must not be serving an existing scholarship bond with Fiji or any other government.

**For Masters level study:**

- program of study must not be available locally
- must hold a first degree and have achieved above average results and have at least 2 years' relevant work experience
- mature age applicants who do not hold a first degree must have at least 10 years' relevant work experience, have achieved a pass grade at either the Year 12 or Year 13 or equivalent level, and/or have successfully undertaken relevant tertiary studies or some form of continuing education
- must not hold a Master's degree either at time of application or commencement of award
- must not be serving an existing scholarship bond with Fiji or any other government.

While there is no age limit, a scholar's potential outputs on return from study will be assessed during selection.

**Please note:** it is important you check carefully the entry requirements for the institution and course of study you are applying for.

**Q25. Do I have to be employed full-time to apply for the scholarship?**

- A. No. You do not have to be in full-time employment at the time of submission of your application, however you need to clearly demonstrate your ability to contribute to the priority sector selected.

**Q26. What supporting documents must I attach to my application?**

- A. Applicants must submit all supporting documents listed in the AAS Handbook.

Guidance for applicants on using the online application facility OASIS is at: <http://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/oasis-applicant-user-guide.aspx>

Applicants will need to supply a number of documents to support their scholarship application including, but not necessarily limited to:

- a certified copy of original formal degree graduation certificate
- a certified copy of original **official** academic transcript/s
- a certified copy of a citizenship document (e.g. passport or national identity card)
- a certified copy of original birth certificate and, if not in English, a certified translation
- a **current** curriculum vitae (CV) briefly detailing work history and responsibilities (and research experience, if relevant to the application)
- referee reports: at least one academic referee report and at least one other referee report (e.g. a work supervisor).
- Masters by Research applicants should provide two academic referee reports. A template for the preferred format of a referee report is available at <http://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia-awards/pages/how-toapply-for-an-australia-awards-scholarship.aspx>

**Q27. What happens if I do not upload one of the required documents?**

- A. Your application will be deemed ineligible and you will not be considered for a scholarship.

**Q28. What is meant by a certified copy of an original document?**

- A. Certification is where an authorised person has checked the copy of the document against the original document to ensure that the copy is true and accurate. Certified copies are photocopies which have been signed by a public notary, Justice of the Peace, or School Principal/Academic registrar of the institution providing the course, after the sighting of your original documents.

All transcripts need to be certified, the Australian High Commission Suva then certifies official transcripts for institution purposes for successful awardees.

**Q29. I have recently completed a further university qualification and have not obtained my certificate yet. Should I submit my transcript only?**

- A. A fresh graduate who has not yet received a certificate can submit their transcript and an acknowledgement letter from the university stating that they have completed their degree. All previous study/qualifications must be included in the application including any overseas or incomplete qualifications.

**Q30. What are the English language requirements to meet eligibility for a scholarship?**

Institutions in Australia require all international students to have a specific level of English language proficiency. You may be requested to sit an English test as a requirement to receive an offer letter if the institution assesses your English as being below the required level. If you have completed an IELTS test within the last two years and your certification is still valid, submit it with your application. Generally, Fiji applicants are not required to sit for an IELTS test to receive an offer, however it is advisable to check the institutional requirements prior to selecting the institution.

**Q31. Does evidence of work experience have to be submitted with application?**

- A. Yes. Evidence of work experience must be provided. Please note:
1. paid internships are considered as work experience/employment
  2. work experience is calculated up to 30 April 2018 (closing date of applications)
  3. work experience can be a combination of part-time experience/employment, so long as the full-time equivalency (of 24 months) can be readily calculated and evidenced.

This evidence (or combination of evidence) must indicate position/s held, name of the applicant, and duration of employment i.e. including start date and end date (or if employment is ongoing). Evidence must satisfy the 24 months eligibility requirement. This evidence must be dated and signed by the employer.

Evidence and statements should clearly indicate **if the position was full-time or part-time**. If part-time it must specify the:

- percentage of work undertaken compared to full-time work (e.g. 50% or half time) **or**
- number of days worked each week (e.g. 3 days per week) so that full time equivalency can be readily calculated.

**Q32. Why might an application be deemed ineligible?**

- A. The most common reasons applications are rejected/deemed ineligible include:
- applicants apply for the wrong level of study (AAS Fiji – Undergraduate and postgraduate only. AAPS Fiji – up to Advanced Diploma only)
  - required supporting documents are not provided
  - required documents are not provided in the correct format
  - evidence of work experience requirement has not been met or sufficiently evidenced



- applicant has an equivalent qualification at the level they are applying for (Masters qualification).

Any document (specified as necessary) missing from an application results in your application being ineligible.

The most common documents omitted are statements and/or evidence of work experience, Degree certificate/s academic, transcript/s and CV's.

Applicants are reminded to carefully consult the required documents and OASIS User Guide about the process for correctly uploading documents (including the maximum document MB size allowed).

**Q33. How will I know if my online application is submitted? Can I print it? Can I download a soft copy?**

- A. You will receive an e-mail confirming the application has been submitted.

You **must** print and/or download a soft copy of your application before you submit it. Once an application has been submitted, it cannot be printed or downloaded.

Before you submit your application you should pay special attention to ensuring your Supporting Documents have been uploaded and appear in the list on the Documentary Evidence screen (in accordance with the OASIS User Guide: <http://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/oasis-applicant-user-guide.aspx>).

We suggest that you have the list of our Required Documents and you cross check them against the list of the document that you have uploaded.

## Selection

**Q34. How are applications assessed?**

- A. Following eligibility checking, applications will be assessed and then short-listed. The selection process will include an interview for those identified as best meeting the assessment criteria.

Applications and performance at the interview will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Academic competence
- Potential outcome, including contribution to development outcomes in Fiji
- Professional and personal leadership attributes.

**Q35. When will I hear about my application?**

- A. Shortlisted applicants can expect to hear if they have been selected for interviews in July 2018. ONLY applicants being invited to interview will be contacted.

**Q36. Who will be on the interview panel?**

- A. The interview panel can consist of any combination of representatives from the following: Australian High Commission in Fiji, representatives from Government of Fiji, and representatives from the private sector.

**Q37. Why have I not been selected for interview?**

- A. The selection criteria includes a review of an applicant's proposal, references, curriculum vitae, academic qualifications, employment history, and proposed postgraduate or undergraduate field of study. Please note that we have invalidated those AAS applications that have applied for a

course of study at an Australian institution that is available at The University of the South Pacific or the Fiji National University.

Applications are further reviewed against the priority sectors determined by the Australian High Commission in Fiji, in consultation with the Fiji Government and the private sector. Please review the [Fiji Country Profile](#) for details on the 2019 priority areas. Candidates are not selected on any single criterion.

## Award of Scholarships

### **Q38. When will applicants be notified that they have been awarded a scholarship?**

- A. Applicants will be notified if they have been offered a provisional AAS award by early August 2018.

### **Q39. What do Australia Awards Scholarships cover?**

- A. Full scholarships are offered for the minimum period necessary for you to complete the academic program specified by the university, including any preparatory training. Scholarships cover return airfare, tuition and compulsory academic fees, establishment allowance, fortnightly stipend, basic health insurance, supplementary academic support and fieldwork allowance – for research students and Masters by Coursework, which has a compulsory fieldwork component.

### **Q40. Do I have to provide an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score when I submit my application?**

- A. Applicants applying for an AAS **do not** need to provide an IELTS (or equivalent) test evidencing the English proficiency eligibility at the time of application, though if one has been obtained, this can be provided. You may be required to sit an IELTS test by the institution at the time of placement if your English proficiency based on academic results is low.

### **Q41. If I pay to sit an IELTS test myself, can I submit the results after the closing date of applications?**

- A. Yes. If you do take a self-funded IELTS test, these results can be provided to the Australia Awards Office up to 16 June 2018.

### **Q42. What other tests may I have to undertake as part of my application for a proposed course of study?**

- A. It is important you check the requirements of your chosen course of study carefully. There are a number of requirements that need to be met, and different institutions may have different criteria to be met. For example, the state of Victoria requires a CASper (Computer-based Assessment for Sampling Personal Characteristics) test to be undertaken for those wishing to pursue an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in Education while others will not require this. It is important you research these criteria and are prepared to meet the requirements.

### **Q43. Do I have to provide a reference from my current work place or supervisor?**

- A. Not necessarily, however if you are planning on returning to work for your employer then ideally your employer should provide a letter of support outlining how the program of study will benefit the workplace and contribute to Fiji's development. If you do not provide a support letter from your employer then you must include references from other reliable parties to validate your application.

### **Q44. I am having difficulties filling in my proposed course of study.**

- A. The CRICOS (Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students) code of your identified proposed course of study must be typed into the application form on OASIS and this will then automatically fill in some of the corresponding fields. Courses can be researched and codes identified at <http://cricos.education.gov.au/>.

**Q45. I am having difficulty filling in my online application on OASIS. Can you help me?**

- A. For extra assistance filling in your online application, please see: <http://www.dfat.gov.au/aboutus/publications/Pages/oasis-applicant-user-guide.aspx>.

**Q46. If I am awarded an Australia Awards Scholarship, will I go to Australia?**

- A. Australia Awards Scholarships are provisional until the following requirements are met:
- applicant is placed at an Australian university
  - applicant is issued with the relevant visa by the Australian Department of Home Affairs

**Q47. What is the age limit to apply for an Australia Award?**

- A. There is no age barrier to apply for an Australia Award Scholarship although a scholar's potential outputs on return will be assessed during selection.

## Awardees

**Q48. Is there any preparatory training?**

- A. Yes. Successful Australia Awards Scholarships applicants will be required to attend a pre-departure briefing before departing for Australia.

Australia Awards scholars will be required to attend an Introductory Academic Program (IAP) on arrival in Australia.

**Q49. Is the Introductory Academic Program (IAP) compulsory?**

- A. Yes, all awardees must attend the full IAP.

**Q50. If I am awarded an Australia Awards Scholarship, when would I need to be in Australia?**

- A. For commencement of studies in semester 1 (in January) awardees are expected to depart for Australia between late December of the previous year and early January. For semester 2 (in June/July) awardees are expected to depart for Australia between late April and May.

The specific departure date will be timed to coincide with the start of your university's orientation and Introductory Academic Program (IAP). The actual start date for this program varies from university to university. Normally, you are expected to be ready for departure two weeks prior to the start dates which are stipulated in your offer. Departure dates are confirmed once visas are granted.

**Q51. Can my family join me in Australia?**

- A. It is strongly recommended that you travel to Australia alone and your family join you after your first six months.

**Q52. Where can I go for help if my questions are not answered here?**

- A. Please send your questions to [australiaawards@ausfijifacility.org](mailto:australiaawards@ausfijifacility.org) or contact the Fiji Program Support Facility, Australia Awards team on 3312141 for Suva; 6662800 for Lautoka or 8811800 for Labasa.

