

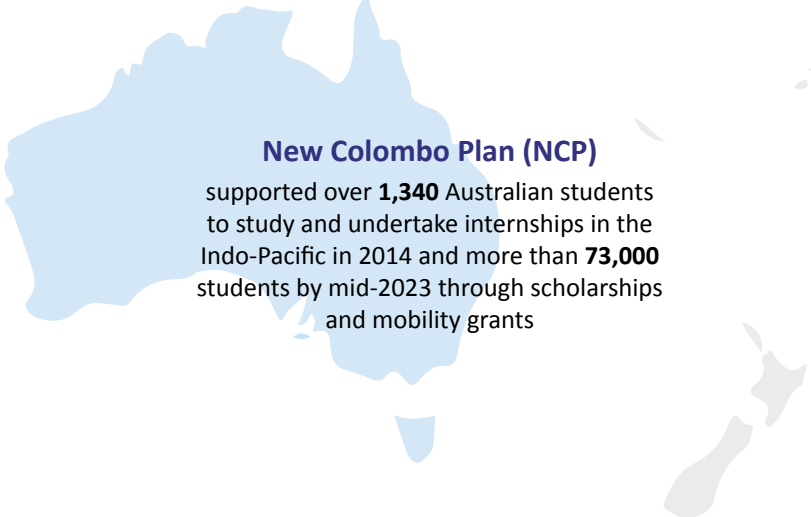


Benefits and challenges of short-term mobility: Australian students in the Indo-Pacific through the New Colombo Plan

Australian Research Council Future Fellowship project: ARC FT170100101
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~23% of Australian graduate students studied abroad in 2019, compared to 7.4% for the UK and 16% for the US in 2018-2019 and 11% for Canada in 2017



New Colombo Plan (NCP)

supported over **1,340** Australian students to study and undertake internships in the Indo-Pacific in 2014 and more than **73,000** students by mid-2023 through scholarships and mobility grants

Data sources for this research project:

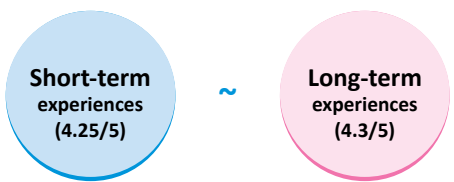
Policy documents	In-country fieldwork	298 interviews with NCP-related stakeholders*	A national survey of 1,371 NCP students and alumni from 40 universities
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* including NCP students and alumni, academics, mobility practitioners, hosts, third-party providers and government representatives in Australia and Indo-Pacific host countries.

Short-term mobility vs Long-term mobility

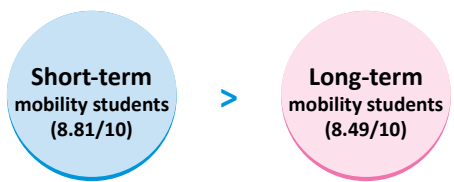
Short-term mobility refers to a mobility program, study tour, summer school, mentorship or/and an internship abroad for less than a semester. Long-term mobility refers to semester-length study abroad.

Impact



No statistically significant difference in the impact of the Indo-Pacific experiences on students' learning outcomes and development

Satisfaction



There was a statistically significant difference in the satisfaction with their Indo-Pacific experiences

The study interviews and survey identified the following benefits, challenges and implications of short-term mobility.

Benefits

- Flexibility to accommodate the diversity of student academic, employment and home responsibilities.
- Short term mobility widens student participation and enhances equity in learning abroad.
- Access to academic staff 24/7 uplifts student learning of content knowledge, provides academic and social support, and is a valuable mechanism to support student wellbeing.
- Academic program leaders actively enhance academic rigour of short-term mobility.
- Student experiences are enhanced by collective and reciprocal learning through engagement with their cohort and host communities.
- Learning is contextualised in an authentic environment by leveraging host community partnerships.
- Well-designed short term mobility programs contribute to students' intercultural competence, regional knowledge, soft skills and employability.
- Short-term mobility programs help to create, diversify or reinforce various networks and partnerships between Australian universities and Indo-Pacific universities/organisations.

Challenges

- Students navigating heavy workloads during the international experience.
- Heightened workload for academics, mobility practitioners and hosts involved in developing and delivering short-term mobility programs.
- Ensuring quality and evaluation of short-term mobility programs can be delivered and assessed consistently across the Australian universities sector.
- Ease of awarding academic credit for a short-term mobility experience.
- Countering the perception that short-term mobility is seen more as a holiday or recreational activity.
- Finding suitable learning tasks or projects that match the preferences and abilities of a cohort of Australian students.
- Involving Australian interns in a project cycle in the workplace and evaluate their performance during short-term internship programs.
- Host organisations' lack of opportunities to co-design short-term mobility programs and access to student evaluations of programs collected by Australian universities.
- Increasing challenges for learning abroad in attracting students, ensuring institutional delivery and aligning the experience with career outcomes.

Practical Implications

- Academic rigour provides students with valuable opportunities to extend content knowledge learning and development of regional cultural literacy and employability.
- Academics play a critical role ensuring programs provide an authentic and effective learning environment in which students develop a holistic understanding of theoretical and practical aspects of the subject matter.
- Curriculum that is aligned to the experience in short-term programs is essential to make the most of students' in-country learning and ensure they have sufficient time for independent exploration.
- Learning abroad experiences should be embedded in the academic curriculum, rather than being add-on elements.
- Program are enhanced when sustainable partnerships are formed with institutions/organisations in the region.
- Co-designing programs with hosts, including downstream hosts, understanding host needs and engaging them across the program cycle (design, pre-departure, delivery and post-study), are crucial.
- There is a need to share good practices in building NCP applications, designing and delivering impactful programs, conducting evaluations, and working with stakeholders.
- It is critical to harness the impacts of learning abroad and align its values with institutions' transnational research and offshore education partnerships, industry engagement, national capacity building and engagement with the region.