

# Interview Questions Bank

## New Colombo Plan

Interviews occur in many formats and for a range of reasons, conducted by different companies, organisations, schools, universities, and governments.

Start by listing some interviews that you have undertaken.

Almost all interviews, no matter which company or organisation is conducting them, involve a process of assessing your candidacy via competency-based questions that draw upon your real experiences. We have introduced the **SEAL** method of reflection to unpack your experience and the **STAR** method of behavioural responses to competency-based interview questions. These underlying methodologies are transferable to a host of situations that you may encounter on your career journey.

Many of you will choose to engage in internships, graduate pathway programs, mentorships and possibly even scholarship programs as well as **professional networking events**. At some point throughout your undergraduate course engaging in these events helps to build networks, gain valuable skills and experience and set you on the right track for future success. We have looked closely at communicating our skills and experiences through the traditional job search format. We will now look at how the same approach can be taken for a scholarship or intern program.

## Example program

**The New Colombo Plan (NCP)** aims to boost Australia's knowledge of the Indo-Pacific region and strengthen Australia's people-to-people and institutional relationships through study and internships/mentorships undertaken by Australian undergraduate students in the region.

In 2022, 375 UQ students received over \$1.6 million in grants to participate in 24 short-term and semester-based programs. Grants in the amount of \$1000 to \$7000 per student are available to support Australian university undergraduates to participate in study, practicums, internships/mentorships and research in the Indo-Pacific region.

In this guide, we will help you prepare for the interview through the following six (6) activities.

### 1. Understand selection criteria

Similarly, to a traditional position application, scholarships and internships use a set of criteria to outline desired competencies. Read through the NCP Assessment Criteria, which we copy and paste from **New Colombo Plan Scholarship Program 2023 Round Guidelines**. While reading through the selection criteria, highlight keywords reflecting key requirements. Keywords can be qualities, skills, experience, qualifications or work conditions. You can demonstrate you are the good fit for this scholarship by:

- Using the same keywords from the job advertisement in your application, including the interview.
- Demonstrating how those keywords apply to you.

## New Colombo Plan assessment criteria

### 6.1 Assessment criteria

In addition to meeting the Eligibility requirements, Applicants will be assessed in accordance with the process set out in Section 8 and against the following Assessment Criteria (for both the written application and at interview). Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview.

#### 6.1.1 Academic excellence at the tertiary level (25 per cent weighting)

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated higher-order cognitive skills, creativity,

innovation, communication skills, problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills in their university study. Applicants may also draw on academic achievements such as academic awards and commendations, publications, or other examples of academic excellence at the tertiary level. (Maximum 300 words.)

High school academic achievements will not be considered.

#### **6.1.2 Leadership and engagement in the community (25 per cent weighting)**

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated leadership in the community, including in volunteer and not-for-profit roles, employment and/or other activities they have undertaken locally, nationally, overseas and/or at their university. Applicants should provide an example of a leadership role they have undertaken. (Maximum 300 words.)

#### **6.1.3 Adaptability and resilience (25 per cent weighting)**

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated ability to adapt to change and thrive in a different environment, and their resilience in the face of challenges. (Maximum 300 words.)

#### **6.1.4 Ability to contribute to NCP's strategic objective and outcomes (25 per cent weighting)**

Assessment of this criterion will relate to the Applicant's demonstrated understanding of the Strategic objective and Outcomes of the NCP program, and how the Applicant and their proposed Scholarship program would contribute to the NCP Strategic objective and outcomes, including on return to Australia. (Maximum 300 words.)

## **2. Getting started**

Think about how you would tailor a response for the New Colombo Plan. Some of the things that you might want to include would be:

- Your aspirations
- Your study and opportunities to contribute to NCP goals
- Your interest to forge these connections
- Your demonstrated skills that you could contribute to proposed activities
- Your future goals aligned with NCP's goals

### 3. Prepare your responses to behavioural interview questions using the STAR method

A typical behavioural interview question is: **Tell me about a time when you had to...**

It is recommended that you structure your response using the STAR method:

**S:** What was the situation? What happened? What was the context?

**T:** What was your task or problem?

**A:** What action did you take? What did you do?

**R:** What was the result or outcome?

Now it is time to practice. Use the NCP assessment criteria as a base to work through the following examples of behavioural questions.

Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership and engagement in a community.	
S	
T	
A	
R	

Tell me about a time you demonstrated resilience and adaptability.	
S	
T	
A	
R	

Tell me about a time you had to use problem solving skills.	
S	
T	
A	
R	

Now have a try at structuring your own questions drawing from the assessment criteria.

Tell me about a time...	
S	
T	
A	
R	

Tell me about a time...	
S	
T	
A	
R	

Tell me about a time...	
S	
T	
A	
R	

## 4. Deep dive (optional)

The following tasks and activities are suited for people interested in the NCP or those seriously considering similar programs. Moving forward we will look at:

- Stakeholder awareness
- Aligning your experience with program goals).

### Stakeholder analysis

It is very important to be aware of the program stakeholders. Specifically, how you will/could engage them and what the impact those connections will have on your goals.

**What do you know about your proposed country? What is your interest in it?**

**Who are the stakeholders and what are their expected contribution?**

**How do you plan to connect to leaders in government, business and civil society in the region?**

### Stakeholder analysis table

Start brainstorming your stakeholders (your key contacts) and how you will/could engage. Utilise the table on the next page.



## 5. Articulate your proposed experience and alignment with NCP

It is also important to deconstruct your proposed experience and how it aligns with the New Colombo Plan. Below are a few questions to get you thinking about how you will articulate your experience in relation to NCP.

**What actions are you going to undertake to achieve the NCP goals? Overseas/Australia?**

**Why do you think your proposed activities will contribute to NCP goals?**

**What do you expect will be risks and challenges in your undertaking?**

**What are your demonstrated skills that contribute to your proposed activities?**

**How will your strengths contribute to achieve the NCP purpose?**

**Are your future goals aligned with NCP's goals? How so?**

**What's the value of personal & institutional relationships between Australia and the Indo-Pacific?**

What is the long-term value in doing this project overseas vs. Australia?

How do your aspirations align with this experience?

What do you expect to learn from the proposed activities?

Are your future goals aligned with NCP's goals? How so?

## Closing remarks

At the end of an interview, you should have the opportunity to ask the panel questions. It is highly encouraged and equally important to come prepared with a couple of questions for the interviewers in mind.

List three (3) questions you might have for NCP interviews

**For further details, please contact:**

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