INFORMATION FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS FINISHING THE HSC THIS YEAR

INTRODUCTION

The NSW Department of Education and Communities is offering a number of scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school leavers to commence study in an initial teacher education program in 2015. Scholarships can be up to five years in length.

The scholarship will provide support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who wish to be employed as primary teachers or in any secondary teaching area, including priority areas of mathematics, science (particularly physics), English (particularly in combination with drama or history), technological and applied studies (particularly design and technology in combination with engineering studies or industrial technology – timber, metal or graphics) or *special education in NSW public schools.

You have the option of selecting "Anywhere in the State" or alternatively a minimum of three school education areas as your service commitment areas under your Deed of Agreement.

If you select to be appointed "Anywhere in the State" you are agreeing to an appointment to a school within any of the following school education areas:-

Albury, Armidale, Bankstown, Batemans Bay, Bathurst, Blacktown, Bondi, Bourke, Broken Hill, Campbelltown, Central Coast, Clarence/Coffs Harbour, Deniliquin, Dubbo, Fairfield, Granville, Griffith, Hornsby, Lake Macquarie, Lismore, Liverpool, Maitland, Moree, Mount Druitt, Muswellbrook, Newcastle, Northern Beaches, Orange, Parramatta, Penrith, Port Jackson, Port Macquarie, Queanbeyan, Ryde, Shellharbour, St George, Sutherland, Tamworth, Taree, Tweed Heads/Ballina, Wagga Wagga, Windsor, Wollongong.

Alternatively, you can select individual school education areas, but must select a minimum of three.

The following information should be reviewed before completing your application.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

You are eligible for admission to the scholarship program if you are an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander completing your HSC in 2014 in a NSW or ACT secondary school or TAFE NSW, and are entering a tertiary program in 2015, through a recognised Australian higher education institution, leading to an initial teacher education qualification.

The Teacher Education Scholarship will support outstanding NSW and ACT school leavers for up to five years of a recognised primary education, secondary education or special education program.
A list of approved initial teacher education programs for NSW and ACT is available from the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards’ website.

*Applicants for special education scholarships must also graduate with qualifications in either primary teaching or in a secondary teaching subject. There are currently only two recognised initial teacher education programs in special education in NSW. These are offered through The University of New England and The University of Newcastle. The University of Newcastle course is available as an internship in the fourth year of study only, and, as entry is not guaranteed, is only appropriate for a one year scholarship applied for in your third year of teacher training.

Successful applicants will be required to sign a Deed of Agreement with the Department committing them to:

- successfully completing the primary or secondary teacher education or special education program and meeting the Department's recruitment requirements and Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards’ accreditation requirements;
- accepting a teaching appointment to a school in an agreed location; and
- remaining in a permanent full-time teaching appointment for a minimum period of three years.

Please refer to the Department's website for details of primary, secondary and central schools and state map.

You can also view our public schools by School Staffing Areas.

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**SUPPORT**

If you are selected for one of the scholarships, the Department will:

- provide a training allowance of $5,000 for each year of the scholarship based on a full course load of eight or more subjects; and
- guarantee employment as a teacher (which initially may be above establishment*) in a NSW public school in an agreed location upon successful completion of the program, meeting the Department's recruitment requirements and meeting the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards’ requirements; and
- provide a one-off grant of $3,000 on appointment to a NSW public school.

*You may be appointed initially as a permanent teacher to a temporary position in a school in one of your agreed locations until a suitable substantive vacancy arises.

In addition, graduating teacher education students may receive further benefits from the Australian Government in the form of a HECS-HELP benefit.

Currently the minimum starting salary for a four year trained teacher in 2014 is $61,061 per annum.

As a teacher in the NSW public school system, you will have access to a range of training and development opportunities offered by the Department. You will also have access to generous leave entitlements and support structures which will assist you in your role as a teacher.

There are a wide range of opportunities for promotion both in schools and across the Department. Teachers can apply for positions in a variety of specialist and management positions within regional offices and state office directorates.

You are encouraged to consider teaching in non-coastal rural areas of NSW. Please visit the Department's website for more information about teaching in rural areas.
TAXATION IMPLICATIONS

It is important that you understand the effect of the scholarship program in relation to Commonwealth taxation matters.

The scholarship which you receive from the Department will include payment of a training allowance and a one-off grant. These items may have an impact on Centrelink benefits and taxation matters in accordance with your own personal circumstances.

You are required to include the training allowance and one-off grant as assessable income in your annual income tax return. Your actual liability for tax will depend on your total earnings and other personal circumstances.

When completing your Tax File Number Declaration form please be aware that if you claim the tax-free threshold with the Department, tax will not be deducted at point of payment of the training allowance. If you cannot claim the tax-free threshold because you have already claimed it with another employer, or you choose not to claim the tax-free threshold with the Department, or you fail to provide your Tax File Number Declaration form to the Department, tax will be deducted from your training and location allowances at point of payment at a rate of 31.5 per cent.

If you are, or will be in receipt of any Commonwealth benefits such as Austudy, you are advised to contact your local Centrelink office about any impact the training allowance and one-off grant may have.

A fact sheet is available from the Australian Taxation Office on likely impacts and thresholds.

If you require specific taxation advice based on your own personal circumstances, you should contact the Australian Taxation Office.

SELECTION PROCESS

If you satisfy the entry requirements for admission to the scholarship program and you are deemed suitable for sponsorship, you will be called to an interview in the week commencing 10 November 2014.

Your face-to-face interview will be conducted in Sydney at Blacktown State Office, 22 Main Street, Blacktown. Remotely located or interstate applicants may request a video conference interview, however, this will still require you to attend a Departmental Office in NSW.

The offer of sponsorship is dependent on you:

- being accepted into an appropriate primary teacher education, secondary teacher education or special education program at a recognised Australian higher education institution;
- satisfying a Working with Children Check; and
- entering into a Deed of Agreement.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

The Department requires all employees to consent to several screening processes to be undertaken to check suitability for working with children. A Working With Children Check is a prerequisite for anyone in child-related work. It involves a national criminal history check and review of reported workplace misconduct.
TIMELINE

The timeline for completion of the selection process is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 October 2014</td>
<td><strong>Final date for receipt of applications</strong>. Please ensure all documentation is attached. Failure to submit all documentation may result in your application not being considered. You may update your details in e-scholarships by logging into your application and clicking the edit function, up to the closing date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 October – 28 November 2014</td>
<td><strong>Short-listed applicants contacted and invited to interview</strong>. Please ensure that you can be contacted by email and telephone during this period. Please notify us by email of any changes to your contact details following the closing date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 November – 28 November 2014</td>
<td><strong>Selection interviews</strong>. Interviews will be conducted at Blacktown State Office, 22 Main Street, Blacktown. A video conference interview may be requested for remotely located or interstate applicants however, will still require attendance at a DEC office closer to your residential address but within NSW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 December 2014</td>
<td><strong>Offers to successful applicants commence</strong>. Offers of scholarships are for entry to university in Semester 1, 2015. Offers are subject to acceptance into an appropriate teacher education program.</td>
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DEED OF AGREEMENT

Scholarship holders are required to sign a Deed of Agreement that outlines the responsibilities of both parties to the agreement and specifies the duration and area of the service commitment.

The Deed of Agreement is a legally binding agreement between yourself and the Department. It is important to examine the terms of the Deed of Agreement closely.

APPOINTMENT AS A TEACHER AFTER TRAINING

During your final year of study, you will be required to fulfil the Department's recruitment requirements under the Graduate Recruitment Program and apply for a Statement of Eligibility for accreditation as a new scheme teacher * with the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards.

Your employment as a teacher is dependent on you:

- completing all university requirements of your teacher education program satisfactorily within the agreed timeframe;
- meeting academic requirements for eligibility for accreditation at provisional level with the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards;
- being deemed personally suitable for teaching at a graduate teacher interview;
- accepting a permanent full-time (substantive or above establishment) appointment as a primary, secondary or special education teacher as stated in the Deed of Agreement; and
- satisfying a Working with Children Check.

*Teachers who are first employed during or after term four 2004, or who are returning to teaching during or after term four 2004 after a break of five years or more, will be considered new scheme teachers under the Institute of Teachers Act 2004. From 1 January 2005, in order to be employed as a teacher in NSW, new scheme teachers need to meet NSW Institute of Teachers accreditation requirements, including payment of an annual fee.
APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for a scholarship, you will need to:

- apply through the University Admissions Centre or interstate equivalent to enter an appropriate teacher education program in 2015;
- complete all sections of the e-scholarship application form;
- obtain your principal's recommendation on the template provided;
- ensure all relevant items listed on the application check list have been collected, copied and certified, and scanned to your application; and
- check your application and then submit it online.

CLOSING DATE FOR THE RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION UNDER THE 2015 TEACHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM:

3 OCTOBER 2014

If you have further questions concerning the application form or application process, please contact the Teacher Education Scholarship team by telephone on 1300 301 435, Monday to Friday, between 8.30am and 4.30pm or by email at scholarships@det.nsw.edu.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants for a Teacher Education Scholarship may wish to contact the Department's Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Team on telephone 02 9836 9103 or by email at Aboriginal.Employment@det.nsw.edu.au to obtain further information and assistance.

*N.B. 'Aboriginal' is inclusive of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people.*