

# Scholarships - Undergraduate and Vocational Education Policy and Procedures

## Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

- (1) To provide a framework for the management and implementation of the Victoria University Access Scholarships Program, and the Commonwealth Scholarships Program at Victoria University as set out in the Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Education) 2010, Higher Education Support Act 2003.
- (2) To ensure that the University meets its obligations for the delivery of Commonwealth Scholarships.
- (3) To ensure that the University provides assistance to students in need and meets its obligations for complementary scholarships in relation to the Commonwealth Scholarships.
- (4) To detail the eligibility, selection criteria and procedures for the Victoria University Access Scholarships and Commonwealth Scholarships.

### BACKGROUND

- (5) The Higher Education Support Act 2003 introduced Commonwealth Scholarships, along with a requirement for the University to administer the program. The requirement to establish an institutional equity scholarship program to complement the Commonwealth Scholarships Program, led to the introduction of the Victoria University Access Scholarships Program from 2005.
- (6) Significant changes were made to the Commonwealth Scholarships program in March 2010. Payment of new Commonwealth Scholarships is now administered via Centrelink. Universities are no longer permitted to award new Commonwealth Scholarships to non-Indigenous students. Universities are still required to continue to administer continuing Commonwealth Scholarships until the entitlement is consumed. It is expected that this requirement will continue until the end of 2014.

## Section 2 - Scope / Application

- (7) Nil

## Section 3 - Definitions

- (8) Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarships (CAS) are available to full-time higher education students with low income backgrounds who have relocated from regional or remote localities to study at Victoria University. Includes CAS-Ordinary and CAS-Specialist. These scholarships are available only to continuing students whose scholarship was granted prior to 31 December 2009.
- (9) Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarships (CECS) are available to full-time higher education students from low-income backgrounds to assist them to meet the costs associated with higher education. Includes CECS-Ordinary and CECS-Priority Discipline. These scholarships are available only to continuing students whose scholarship was granted

prior to 31 December 2009.

(10) Eligible full-time student is a student who:

- a. Is enrolled in a Higher Education course of study with at least 75% of a full-time study load (minimum of 36 credit points per semester); or
- b. Is enrolled in a Vocational Education course of study in at least 270 hours of study per semester.

(11) Eligible part-time student Is a student who is not enrolled full-time but:

- a. Is enrolled in at least 25% of a full-time course of study; and
- b. Is able to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances prevent him/her from enrolling full-time. Students who are registered with VU Disability Services are eligible if enrolled part-time.

(12) Indigenous student is a student of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. The University will determine Indigenous eligibility on the basis of the applicant's declaration, and where necessary, confirmation in writing from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander incorporated organisation in a community in which the student lives or has lived. Evidence of receipt of ABSTUDY payment will also be considered.

(13) Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarships (ICAS) are available to full-time higher education indigenous students with low income backgrounds who have relocated from regional or remote localities to study at Victoria University.

(14) Indigenous Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarships (ICECS) are available to full-time higher education indigenous students from low-income backgrounds to assist them to meet the costs associated with higher education.

(15) Indigenous Access Scholarship (IAS) is a one-off payment for indigenous students when commencing an eligible undergraduate course.

(16) Low-income status refers to a student who is suffering financial hardship as determined by their income and supported by verifiable evidence (such as receipt of Centrelink payment).

(17) Regional or remote location is defined by the Australian Standard Geographic Classification Remoteness Areas classification.

(18) Relocation Scholarship means those accommodation scholarships administered by Centrelink

(19) Start Up Scholarship means those education scholarships administered by Centrelink

### **Victoria University Scholarship categories**

- a. Equity Scholarship - awarded substantially on assessment of income and social disadvantage. Equity scholarships include: Commonwealth Scholarships, VU Access Scholarships, Victorian Ambulance Paramedic Scholarships, Western Chances Access Scholarships, John Byrne Scholarship, Sorooptimist Indigenous Scholarship for Women.
- b. Merit Scholarship - awarded substantially on assessment of academic performance, community contribution, career objectives or similar criteria. Where income or social disadvantage comprises less than 50% of the assessment, the scholarship shall be considered to be a merit scholarship. Merit scholarships include: VU Achievement Scholarship, Faculty scholarships and awards based on student academic performance and / or community contribution.
- c. Specific Purpose Scholarships — may be awarded on an equity or merit basis and may include specific criteria for eligibility: Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarships, Western Chances Success Scholarships (Fee

Sponsorship), Khoto-Victorian Taxi Association Scholarship, Faculty scholarships awarded for specific purposes.

- d. Third Party Scholarships are awarded and managed by an external individual or organisation independently of Victoria University. The University may encourage and / or facilitate student application for these scholarships (Zonta Club Awards for Women are an example)

(20) Western Region of Melbourne schools includes secondary schools that offer Year 12 and are located in the municipal districts of Altona, Bacchus Marsh, Broadmeadows, Bulla, Essendon, Footscray, Keilor, Melton, Sunshine, Werribee and Williamstown.

## Section 4 - Policy Statement

(21) Nil

## Section 5 - Procedures

### Applications

(22) Applications will be open to all eligible students of the University. Students will be invited to apply online. Students need only submit one application and will be assessed against each of the available for which they meet the eligibility criteria. Support in the preparation of an application can be obtained from the Scholarships Office, Student Welfare staff or staff within Teaching and Learning Support. Students will be required to present documentary evidence to support their applications.

### Selection

(23) The Scholarships Selection and Review Panel will consist of:

- a. the Director Student Engagement or nominee;
- b. the Manager, Equity and Social Justice Branch, or nominee;
- c. a Student Welfare officer;
- d. a Student Representative, and
- e. the Chair, Education and Research Board, or nominee.
- f. Three members of the panel constitute a quorum.

(24) Selection will be made on the basis of an assessment of financial need and equity considerations. The Selection Panel will ensure that scholarships will only be awarded to students who meet the eligibility criteria as set out in this policy.

(25) Applicants will be ranked according to a total score derived from a set of weighted indicators including financial hardship, equity and educational disadvantage to ensure that scholarships are provided to those students most in need. Scholarships will be allocated according to value with the highest value being allocated to the most disadvantaged students. The panel will endeavour to ensure that there is relative equal representation across these indicators and the scholarship eligibility categories. Special consideration will be given to Indigenous students. The selection panel will take into account the value of all scholarships or other awards the applicant may hold, including pending awards under this scheme.

### Duration and Value of Scholarships

(26) The Commonwealth Department responsible for scholarship delivery will provide the University with an annual allocation of Commonwealth Scholarships, their durations and values. The University will participate in any required

bidding processes to request allocation of new scholarships.

(27) The value of each VU Access scholarship will be reviewed annually by the Selection Panel. Any recommendation to alter the value will be referred via the relevant PVC to be considered by the appropriate committee. Information on the value of the scholarship will be advertised in the Scholarships website on an annual basis.

(28) Students who are granted a scholarship and defer commencement of their studies, will be required to re-apply for a scholarship at the time of commencement. Scholarships will not be held for deferred students.

(29) Students who take approved leave of absence from their studies will have their scholarship suspended. Payment will recommence in the next semester of enrolment, and continue to the maximum period of the scholarship.

### **Payment of Scholarships**

(30) Scholarships are paid for the maximum duration specified unless the student is no longer eligible to receive payment. This includes where a student completes their course of study or no longer meets the eligibility criteria.

(31) Scholarships will normally be paid by Electronic Funds Transfer direct to a student's bank account.

(32) Payments to Higher Education students on Commonwealth scholarships will be made in two equal instalments, usually in April and September each year, following confirmation of student enrolment status after each semester census date.

(33) Payments to Higher Education and Vocational Education students on VU Access scholarships will be made in one instalment, usually within one month of the student receiving and accepting the scholarship offer.

### **Ongoing eligibility requirements**

(34) In order to maintain ongoing eligibility for a Scholarship, the scholarship holder:

- a. Must maintain satisfactory academic progress, according to the University's Student Progress Policy.
- b. Must comply with University standards with regard to academic misconduct.
- c. May transfer to another eligible Higher Education or Vocational Education program at Victoria University, but must maintain continuous enrolment, including periods of leave.
- d. Must continue to meet the basic eligibility requirements as given in their original application. It is the scholarship holder's responsibility to advise the Scholarships Office of any changes to their circumstances which would make them ineligible to continue to receive the Scholarship. This includes changes in a student's financial situation and changes in study load.
- e. A student who holds a scholarship whose course load falls below 75% of a full-time load, must have their eligibility status reviewed and will be ineligible to retain their scholarship unless there are exceptional circumstances which have been reviewed and approved by the University.

### **Termination of Scholarships**

(35) A scholarship will be terminated in any of the following circumstances:

- a. The scholarship holder ceases to meet the eligibility criteria, other than during a period in which the scholarship holder is on approved leave; or
- b. The full value of the scholarship has been paid in respect to the maximum period of scholarship payment; or
- c. The scholarship holder ceases to be enrolled in an eligible course of study; or
- d. The scholarship holder does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of leave; or
- e. The scholarship holder is found guilty of serious academic misconduct as determined by the Discipline

Committee of the University.

- f. The scholarship holder fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress according to the University's Student Progress Policy.

## **Confidentiality**

(36) All information provided by applicants will be treated as confidential, according to the University's Information Privacy Policy.

(37) Applications and supporting documentation will be maintained in accordance with the University's Records Management Schedules.

## **Appeals**

(38) Applicants may lodge an appeal to the relevant PVC, in circumstances where:

- a. Unsuccessful applicants believe there was a breach of process in the handling of their application; or
- b. Scholarship holders have been determined as ineligible for continuation of their scholarship.

# **Section 6 - Guidelines**

(39) Eligibility - Commonwealth Scholarships — Higher Education students only

- a. A student is eligible to apply for an Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarship (IAS, ICECS and ICAS) if they meet the basic eligibility requirements:
  - i. Australian citizen and
  - ii. Indigenous person (self declared or supported by evidence if status is unclear);
  - iii. Enrolled full-time in a Bachelor degree, Associate Degree or eligible Enabling course, or
  - iv. Enrolled full-time in a Graduate Diploma in an area of National Priority (Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education at Victoria University), and
  - v. Not already completed a bachelor degree or higher level degree unless each such degree is a prerequisite for their current course of study, and there is no alternative pathway into that course of study at Victoria University, and
  - vi. Enrolled in a Commonwealth Supported Place, and
  - vii. Able to demonstrate low socio-economic status through being in receipt of a means-tested Commonwealth income support payment (Centrelink), or provide other evidence of low income and / or social disadvantage.
  - viii. If enrolled on a part time basis, be assessed as having approved exceptional circumstances. In determining inability to study full-time, the University will take into account factors such as: enabling course requirements; disability; significant family care responsibilities; Indigenous community responsibilities; or course constraints outside a student's control. Applicants with exceptional circumstances will need to be enrolled in at least one quarter of a full time load.
  - ix. A student is not eligible for an IAS if they have previously received IAS payment in part or whole
  - x. A student is not eligible for an ICECS if they have already received a CECS or ICECS for the maximum duration.

(40) Eligibility — Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarships — Higher Education students

- a. In addition to meeting the basic eligibility requirements for an Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarship students

are eligible for a Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship (CAS) if they meet the following eligibility requirements:

- i. Lived in a regional or remote area for at least three of the previous four years immediately preceding the commencement of their course of study; or
- ii. Completed the final two years of schooling in a high school or college in a regional or remote area immediately prior to the commencement of study; or
- iii. Lived away from their regional or remote home to complete the whole or majority of secondary schooling at a high school or college in a major city; or
- iv. Lived in a regional or remote area for at least two years and relocated to undertake vocational education and training (maximum of two years) immediately preceding the commencement of their undergraduate course; and
- v. It was necessary for the student to move away from the regional or remote area to undertake their course of study and, as a result, the student has incurred or will incur additional accommodation costs; and
- vi. Is enrolled as an internal student (attends classes on campus).
- vii. A student is not eligible for a CAS if they have already received an ICAS or CAS for the maximum duration.

#### (41) Eligibility - VU Access Scholarships

- a. A student is eligible to apply for a Victoria University Access Scholarship if they meet the basic eligibility:
  - i. Australian citizen, Australian Permanent Resident, holder of a Permanent Humanitarian Visa or holder of a Temporary Protection Visa, and
  - ii. Experiencing financial hardship demonstrated through receipt of a means-tested Commonwealth income support payment or other evidence of low income and / or social disadvantage, and
  - iii. Enrolled full-time, except in exceptional circumstances and
  - iv. Further categories of eligibility apply according to whether a student is enrolled in a Higher Education or Vocational Education course of study as defined in 43 to 45 below.

#### (42) VU Access Scholarships - Higher Education Student — Eligibility

- a. An eligible Higher Education student:
  - i. Is an undergraduate student enrolled full-time in a Bachelor Degree, Associate Degree or eligible Enabling course at Victoria University, or
  - ii. Enrolled full-time in a Graduate Diploma in an area of National Priority (Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education at Victoria University), and
  - iii. Has not already completed a bachelor degree or higher level degree unless each such degree is a prerequisite for their current course of study, and there is no alternative pathway into that course of study at Victoria University, and
  - iv. Is enrolled in a Commonwealth Supported Place, and
  - v. Is not in receipt of a Centrelink Start Up scholarship or Centrelink Start-up loan

#### (43) VU Access Scholarships - Vocational Education Student — Eligibility

- a. An eligible Vocational Education student:
  - i. Is enrolled full-time in a designated course that is government funded, and on the University Scope of Registration.
  - ii. Is not in receipt of a Centrelink Startup Scholarship or a Centrelink Start-up loan.

#### (44) VU Access Scholarships — Categories of Eligibility

- a. Students with dependent children - Available to Vocational Education and Higher Education students who have dependent children of either school or under school age.
- b. Students who have studied in the western region of Melbourne - Available to Vocational Education and Higher Education students who completed Year 12 studies at a school located in the western region of Melbourne in the year prior to commencing their course at Victoria University.
- c. Students who are mature age and returning to study - Available to Vocational Education and Higher Education students over 21 years of age who have had a break from formal study of more than five years.
- d. Youth - Available to Vocational Education students under 19 years of age or under 21 years of age if a recent migrant or refugee, who have not completed Year 12 studies.
- e. Students transferring or articulating from Vocational Education to Higher Education - Available to students who are transferring from a Victoria University Vocational Education course to a Higher Education course. Available only in the year of transfer.
- f. General Access - Available to Vocational Education and Higher Education students who are not eligible under categories (45) a to e. Must demonstrate significant disadvantage including refugees, recent migrants, persons with a disability, Indigenous students.

#### (45) Multiple Scholarship Guidelines

- a. To ensure that scholarships are available to the maximum number of students and that individual students receive the appropriate level of scholarship support, the University has defined the conditions under which a student may hold more than one scholarship, or may be required to relinquish one or more scholarships before being granted an alternative scholarship.
- b. Students who have already been awarded a scholarship may apply for an additional scholarship, for a scholarship of a higher value or different duration, or for a scholarship aimed at a specific target audience.
- c. A student may not hold more than one Equity scholarship, but may apply for and be granted a scholarship of greater value or duration. When a student is granted a scholarship of greater value or duration the original scholarship shall terminate.
- d. A student may not hold both a Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship (Specific Purpose) and an Equity scholarship (including a Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship).
- e. A student may hold one or more Merit or Specific Purpose scholarships, and may hold these in addition to an Equity scholarship if already in receipt of the Equity scholarship when granted the Merit or Specific Purpose scholarship. An Equity scholarship will not be granted to a student who already holds one or more Merit or Specific Purpose scholarships.
- f. The exception to (46) e will apply where the scholarships are both funded either partly or fully by Victoria University. In these cases, a student may hold only one scholarship, usually the higher valued scholarship will be awarded.
- g. Where a selection panel or officer is determining the granting of any scholarship, they may take into account the value of any Equity, Merit, Specific Purpose or Third Party scholarships in assessing a student's income, if income assessment is part of the documented selection process.
- h. When offering a student a scholarship of equal or greater value, longer duration, or alternative purpose, the Scholarships Office will advise the student if they will be required to relinquish the original scholarship in order to accept the offer.
- i. Where a scholarship renewal requires an income declaration, any additional scholarships providing ongoing income must be considered as part of the income review. Scholarships, prizes or awards which consist of a one-off payment are not considered as ongoing income.
- j. A student may request a variance in the application of multiple scholarship guidelines by writing to the Chair of

the Scholarships Selection Panel, via the Scholarships Office. The only grounds for the granting of a variance will be documented evidence of extreme hardship or other relevant circumstances.

- k. These guidelines shall apply to new scholarships issued on or after 1 January 2007 and shall not retrospectively affect any multiple scholarships previously approved.



## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	8th September 2014
<b>Review Date</b>	30th September 2020
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice-Chancellor
<b>Approval Date</b>	8th September 2014
<b>Expiry Date</b>	8th November 2021
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Lisa Line Deputy Vice-Chancellor Enterprise and Digital Lisa.Line@vu.edu.au
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Darrel Caulfield Chief Student Officer and Registrar darrel.caulfield@vu.edu.au
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Steve Wright Director, Admissions, Enrolments, and Graduations +61 3 9919 4078