

SCHOLARSHIPS

TERM OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR TONGA STUDY AWARDS INDEPENDENT ASSESSOR

Background

The Tonga Study Awards (TSA) are offered by the Governments of Tonga, New Zealand and Australia for scholarships to study in New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific region. The TSA is an umbrella programme encompassing the following scholarship schemes: New Zealand Pacific Scholarships, Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships (AAPS) and Government of Tonga Scholarships.

In alignment with Paris, Accra and Cairns Compact, the TSAs reflect a harmonised approach to scholarships with joint processes and partner consultation and cooperation exercised throughout every aspect of the scholarship shortlisting and selection process.

Selection is based on academic merit, gender equity, and the Government of Tonga's objectives and agreed country program training priorities. To ensure effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, these processes must be transparent, fair and merit-based. As such, an Independent Assessor (IA) is contracted to undertake the vetting, shortlisting and ranking of applicants. The final awarding of scholarships rests with the Joint Scholarship Selection Committee, of which the IA is member. Each year approximately over 50 scholarships are awarded.

Purpose

The Governments of Tonga, New Zealand and Australia are committed to a transparent, credible and fair scholarship selection process under the Tonga Study Awards. An IA is integral in providing transparency and rigour to the shortlisting, ranking and selection process of the TSAs. The IA is responsible for ensuring eligibility criteria is met by all applicants shortlisted for consideration.

Details of Assignment

Prior to the IA assuming the role, the IA is required to attend briefings with the Tonga, New Zealand and Australian Scholarship Office, to explain the process and all formalities required to carry out this assignment.

In addition, the IA shall provide the following services to the Joint Scholarships (GoT, NZ, DFAT) Working Group.

The services for the Joint Scholarships Working Group shall include:

- Working in consultation with the JSWG to design selection eligibility criteria for shortlisting applications.
- Observe at the outreach program if required;
- Checking the applications before short-listing and placement, and identify the ineligible applicants (those that do not meet the eligibility criteria) so as to ensure only complete applications are considered by the Joint Scholarship Selection Committee (JSSC). These shall be done by sorting and screening the applications once closed to ensure that -
 - they are accurate;
 - comply with the application closing dates;
 - meet the generic eligibility and country-specific selection criteria;

- clearly identify the training request, including level and field of study; and
- include certified supporting documentation.
- Preparing a shortlist and drafting report to be presented for discussions with the JSWG;
- Providing final shortlisting report to the JSSC;
- Participating in the JSSC selection panel;
- Providing the final selection panel a list of names against their codes according to the panel prioritisation, based on the outcome of the JSSC selection panel; and
- Assisting with any other tasks as requested pertaining to the shortlisting, selection and reporting of the scholarships selection process.

Duration

The IA will be required over a period of up to four months. The IA will be required to participate in briefings to principals and consultations with partners throughout March and April 2015. It is anticipated that application assessment services will begin in May 2015 and expect to be finalised by the end of June 2015.

Input

Task	Where	Input days
Training/Preparation	Tonga	Up to 5 days
Participate in outreach programs	Tonga	Up to 5 days
Vetting	Tonga	Up to 42 days
Drafting report	Tonga	Up to 7 days
Presenting Report to selection committee	Tonga	Up to 2 days
Finalising report	Tonga	2 days
TOTAL		63 days

Skills and experience

The independent assessor will have relevant skills and experience with scholarship assessments, or in the Education sector. This will include:

- Knowledgeable on the admission entry requirements to tertiary institutions in Fiji, New Zealand and Australia and also understands the Tonga assessment grading system and other institutions assessment
- Experience in administering internal assessments
- Experience in developing, or advising on scholarship assessment criteria
- Understanding and experience of assessment criteria and its application

ANNEX 1

Outputs

	TASK	DATE	FORMAT	COMMENTS
1.	Shortlist of shortlisted applicants for consideration	30 May 2015	Xcel/word spread-sheet	Presented to JSWG via email and hard copy
2.	Draft summary report following selection	12 June 2015	Word document	Presented to JSWG via email and hard copy
3.	Final report on shortlisting and selection process	30 June 2015	Word document	Presented to JSSC via email and hard copy