Eligibility, preference factors and sectors

The New Zealand Commonwealth Scholarships are prestigious scholarships for people from developing countries to study in New Zealand. This scholarship is intended to foster and build potential leaders, as well as equipping individuals with skills and knowledge to benefit their home country.

We look for scholars with good academic ability and leadership skills, as well as assessing how their study can improve development in their country. Following in-country nomination, potential scholars will be further assessed by a rigorous selection process, including online screening and interviews.

Nominating agencies should select the two applications for nomination that best meet the following eligibility conditions, preference factors and sector alignment set out below:

Eligibility: Applicants must meet all the eligibility criteria and the conditions set out by MFAT. Any additional requirements set out by nominating agencies are not permitted. Please refer to page 2 in the application form.

Preference factors:
- Applicants who demonstrate strong academic ability, leadership qualities, and a commitment to the development of their home country
- Applicants who are 39 years of age or younger at the time of commencing their scholarship
- Applicants who apply to study in areas relating to one or more of their country’s sectors
- Gender balance will also be a consideration in final selection decisions

Sectors: Each nominated applicant’s choice of study must directly align to the sectors for their country and region. Please refer to pages 21-36 in the application form for further information relevant to your country. Our sectors are areas that have been identified by the New Zealand Aid Programme as areas that will support the resiliency and growth of your country, and are aligned to areas where New Zealand has specialist expertise. For example, we are known for our innovation in many areas such as climate change and resilience, good governance, economic resilience and private sector.