

**Collaboration and partnerships across multiple sectors – contributing to Defence's strategic and development goals through international education and training, with a focus on customised student support throughout the scholarship life-cycle.**

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**Abstract:**

The Defence Cooperation Program (DCP) is a Department of Defence regional engagement tool to foster and develop relationships between the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and regional defence organisations. The DCP provides engagement opportunities to senior and middle-ranking officers for personnel exchanges and training opportunities of mutual benefit to both the ADF and their parent organisation.

Approximately 800 foreign defence personnel from 50 countries undertake education and training programs every year, in Australia and offshore. Scholarship recipients attend a range of institutions, including universities and private providers.

The Department of Defence collaborates with a number of key strategic partners in order to successfully deliver the DCP and ensure consistency of service delivery for participants. This session will focus on one Defence partnership model, the Defence Cooperation Scholarship Program, and its benefits, challenges, opportunities and innovations. How the various programs' participants are prepared (linguistically, academically, practically and culturally) will be discussed.

The Defence International Training Centre (DITC) delivers a range of training programs for foreign defence personnel, at their location on RAAF Williams, Laverton, Victoria. These programs include five day reception and familiarisation programs (for personnel going on to other short training programs), four week academic preparation programs (for personnel going on to the Australian Defence College or those students undertaking Masters by coursework programs), and a wide variety of English language programs (including teacher training courses, intermediate and upper intermediate language improvement courses, TESOL program curriculum design, the English Language Proficiency Rater Training course, and English for Specific Purposes courses).

The Defence Cooperation Scholarship Program (DCSP) is considered the flagship program of the overall DCP. It provides scholarships for defence personnel from 14 countries to undertake a Masters coursework program at a university in Australia. Scholarship recipients have been identified as future leaders in their countries, and undertake a program of strategic interest or relevance to the Department of Defence and their parent organisation. While the funding and policy direction of the scholarships are provided by the Department of Defence, Scope Global has been contracted to deliver almost all operational aspects of the program (from first contact after initial nomination through to safe arrival in the home country at the conclusion of the scholarship). This involves working closely with a number of key stakeholders including IELTS providers, universities and the Defence International Training Centre. The cohort faces a number of unique challenges, although many of the issues faced by DCSP students are common to almost all international students.

Sylvia Wheeler and Alison White will discuss the challenges, opportunities, issues and innovations of this partnership model across various perspectives and the resulting impact on the students' experience and achieving the overall aims of the Defence Cooperation Program.

**Key takeaways for session participants:**

- Key issues and considerations when implementing collaboration and partnerships in international education
- How collaboration and partnerships can enhance the student experience
- How a complex education and training program develops strategies for mitigating risks and achieving positive outcomes (for students, sponsors, and institutions)

**Themes:**

Working Across Sectors

The Role of Government

Other Collaborative Approaches

Other Topics Related to International Student Experience and Support

**Speaker biographies:****Sylvia Wheeler**

Sylvia Wheeler is employed by the Department of Defence at the Defence International Training Centre (DITC). DITC delivers training to more than 800 regional military personnel per annum under the auspices of the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP). She is the Director of Studies with overall responsibility for the DITC Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) training and materials development activities.

DITC offers a continuum of four Teacher Training Courses for English Second Language teachers, general English language improvement courses at intermediate and upper intermediate levels, English for Specific Purposes courses including military preparation courses (for pre-officer training and for post graduate students entering masters programs at the Australian Defence College) and English for Academic Purposes courses for military personnel selected to attend post graduate courses at various universities in Australia.

**Alison White**

Alison White is employed by Scope Global (formerly known as Austraining International) and since August 2011 has been the Program Manager for the Defence Cooperation Scholarship Program (DCSP), funded by the Department of Defence.

Alison manages all operational aspects of the scholarship program, including: client management and stakeholder relations; academic counselling and university admissions; case management and pastoral care; critical incident management, academic intervention, financial payments to and on behalf of students, regular monitoring visits and student interviews, and general program/risk management. Alison's previous experience in the international education sector includes almost ten years working at the University of Adelaide.