



**Australia Awards**

# **Australian Alumni Research Grants Guidelines**

*(Applies to the Alumni Research Grants Round 5 – 2025-26)*



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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Australian Embassy in Cambodia (via Australia Awards Cambodia [AAC]) is inviting applications for funding research initiatives under the Alumni Research Grants Scheme to address emerging challenges and opportunities within the Cambodian context. These grants will enable Cambodians who are Australian alumni to undertake research that contributes to public discourse and policy development. Grants will be awarded through an open and competitive process.

The Scheme aims to:

- provide alumni with opportunities to enhance and use their knowledge and skills
- develop, maintain and strengthen professional linkages and partnerships between alumni and the Australian Government, Australian businesses, public and private organisations and educational institutions
- connect alumni to each other across disciplines and professions, organisations and institutions, and geographic areas to share good practice and create opportunities for collaboration, and
- showcase Australia's excellence as a global provider of high-quality education and research.

In this way, the Scheme aims to contribute to AAC's two end-of-investment outcomes (EOIOs):

1. Alumni are using their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development
2. Alumni are contributing to cooperation between Australia and Cambodia

The Scheme will provide financial support of up to USD 10,000. Where a project is in partnership with an Australian organisation or individual, an additional USD 2,000 may be available. The research activity should conclude by **no later than 28 February 2026**.

These guidelines apply to Round 5 of the Research Grants Scheme which targets Cambodians who are either Australia Awards Scholarship alumni or privately-funded Australian alumni<sup>1</sup>.

By participating in these research grants, AAC hopes to enable grantees to:

1. generate research that will help inform policy development and decision making on relevant issues,
2. help contribute to the limited body of knowledge and scientific literature in the Cambodian context,
3. help predict and respond to current development challenges in Cambodia and in vulnerable sectors of society.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian alumni includes any Cambodian who has graduated from an Australian university or vocational training centre, either in Australia, online or in another country, and includes all self-funded and scholarship recipients and participants in AAC Short-Term awards – both Short Courses (SCs) and Informal Learning Opportunities (ILOs).



## II. ELIGIBLE RESEARCH AREAS

Research may take place in any number of selected priority areas including (but not limited to):

- **Governance and Economic Growth:** including economics, economic policy reform, private sector development, competition, international trade, investment, public policy, public finance management, entrepreneurship and innovation, women's economic empowerment, civil society strengthening
- **Infrastructure and Transport:** including traffic forecasting, transport engineering, social and environmental safeguards, urban transport planning and management, public-private partnership, transport economics, road safety and audit, logistics management
- **Water and Sanitation:** including water management, water engineering, water quality and supply systems, water and wastewater, water governance, water security. Water sanitation and hygiene
- **Education:** including education management, institutional governance, vocational education management, human capacity and skills development.
- **Gender Equity, Disability, and Social Inclusion:** including gender, disability, women's economic empowerment, social protection policies and systems, addressing gender-based violence, supporting marginalised Cambodians (including poor and at-risk populations, rural disadvantaged groups, women, LGBTQIA+ people, Indigenous Peoples and people living with a disability).
- **Agriculture and Rural Development:** including agribusiness, agricultural economics, agri-processing, rural development, sustainable tourism management, food safety.
- **Regional Stability and Human Rights:** including cyber security, criminology and public governance, international law, international human rights law, transnational crime
- **Climate Change:** including green initiatives, energy transition air quality management, disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and adaption and mitigation.
- **Technology and Innovation:** including science and technology transfer and commercialisation
- **Health:** including bioethics, health security, mental health, pandemics, universal health coverage, nutrition

**Proposals under Alumni Research Grants Round 5 2025-26 will be given special consideration if they assist Cambodia's response to Climate Change in the priority areas listed above,** recognising that climate change is one of the greatest shared threats to all countries and that multidisciplinary approaches are required to mitigate its impacts.

**This is not an exhaustive list of topics, and applicants may choose other topics in these priority areas.**

## III. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

The Scheme is open to all Cambodian nationals who have graduated from an Australian university or vocational training centre, either in Australia, online or in another country, and includes all self-funded and scholarship recipients and participants in AAC Short-Term awards – both Short Courses (SCs) and Informal Learning Opportunities (ILOs).

The applicant must have a degree relevant to the proposed area of research.

Applications may be submitted by an individual alumna/us or group of alumni. Applications from organisations are NOT eligible.

There are no restrictions on the number of times alumni can apply for a grant, but alumni who have not applied before *may* be given preference.



### Team Application Criteria

- A team with non-Australian alumni members may be permitted as long as an Australia alumna/us is the Team Leader or otherwise holds a key position in the team
- The Team Leader must have a degree relevant to the proposed area of research
- Team members must have relevant qualifications and experience
- Any project that has the involvement of a team must clearly demonstrate that it is a team project with specified roles for each team member. It should show the added value in submitting a team proposal as compared to individual submissions.

**If the alumna/us is based in another country, they must co-lead with a Cambodia-based alumni. The research must be done in Cambodia.**

**Applicants must not be named in more than one proposal in any single research grants round.**

Applicants must not have an ongoing or un-acquitted grant under any previous research grant round (i.e., grants cannot be for overlapping periods).

## **IV. PROPOSAL ELIGIBILITY**

### **Ineligible Proposals**

The following types of proposals are **not eligible** for funding under the Research Grants Scheme:

- Proposals which will use the funding for the conduct of masters or doctoral projects
- Proposals which primarily or entirely use the funds for stipends or compensation for the research team (see financial guidelines for more information)
- Proposals which are entirely or primarily for the purchase of equipment
- Proposals which, in effect, subsidise the commercial activities of an individual applicant or a group of applicants for which the individual applicant, or a group of applicants would normally be expected to invest their own funds.

### **General Proposal Guidelines**

- Proposals must deliver broad-based effects or outcomes (i.e., they must not just be focused on individual benefits to an alumna/us or small group of alumni)
- Proposals must consider issues of gender equality, disability inclusion and inclusion of marginalised groups
- Proposals must demonstrate strong consideration of environmental issues, such as using eco-friendly materials
- Proposals must be written in English. If a supporting document is not in English, a translation should be submitted together with the original.
- Proposals must be written and submitted by the applicants themselves unless applicants are persons with disability whose health condition does not allow them to write and submit.



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- Successful applicants will be required to sign a [Grant Agreement](#) before a grant is awarded, which includes mandatory financial and reporting requirements. Click this hyperlink “ [the Grant Agreement format](#)” for your review.
- Successful applicants must gain relevant approvals from local authorities for the proposed activities.
- No funding will be released until documents demonstrating local authority approval for grant activities have been provided to AAC.

### Proposal Submission Requirements and Selection Criteria

While it is recognised that specific criteria may apply to any particular proposal to varying degrees, you should complete the proposal application template as fully as you are able.

The evaluation criteria that will be used to assess applications are as follows:

Submission Requirements	Submission should cover:	Evaluation Weighting (%)
1. Abstract (maximum 250 words)		
2. Strategic Purpose (max. 1,500 words)	Research Question Identification of the rationale, significance, and relevance of key issues addressed by this research (i.e., literature review) Research objectives or expected results of the research Contribution to broader impacts (e.g., for beneficiaries, communities, policy environment)	35%
3. Gender, Disability and Social Inclusion (max. 500 words)	How the proposal addresses/analyses: gender inclusion, disability inclusion, or the inclusion of the rural disadvantaged (such as disadvantaged Indigenous or ethnic minority communities) within the proposed research topic The degree to which the disadvantaged groups are integrated into the research	15%
4. Climate-related issues (max. 500 words)	If and how, the proposal addresses climate-related issues? How many relevant groups will be engaged as part of the research to be undertaken	10%
5. Methodology and Approach (max. 1,500 words)	Plan to achieve the expected results (i.e., methodology)	30%
6. <a href="#">Workplan Timeline Chart, and Activity Description and Scheduling</a> (Detail on provided template in this hyperlink)	Appropriateness of research methods to the expected results and plan How and why the methodology was selected, and the appropriateness to the Cambodian context The number of research participants and how they were selected The implementation plan and timeline for research	



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	The data analysis plan	
7. Risk Assessment and Management – including Financial (max. 500 words)	Analysis of potential risks for successful research completion Risk management plan to mitigate impact of potential risks	10%
8. CVs or other supporting documentation of all Research Team members	Relevance of researcher background(s) Clarity on specific roles undertaken by each researcher	
9. Comprehensive Budget Spreadsheet on provided template in this Hyperlink ( <a href="#">Financial Budget and report</a> )	Budget in accordance with financial guidelines and well matched to implementation plan	
10. Document or Letter approving confirmed co-financing (if relevant)		

Applications may be deemed ineligible if they are incomplete or do not address the selection criteria.

The applicant(s) may be requested by AAC to provide additional information and to resubmit the proposal. Proposals can be re-submitted a maximum of one time.

Proposals will be considered and recommended to the Australian Embassy Phnom Penh/Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) for approval on a competitive basis by the AAC evaluation committee. The AAC evaluation committee will conduct eligibility screening, score eligible applications against the selection criteria, and make recommendations to the Australian Embassy Phnom Penh/DFAT. The Australian Embassy Phnom Penh/DFAT makes final selection.

**Applicants should review by click on this hyperlink “[the Research Grant Financial Guidelines](#) and [Research Grant Communications Guidelines](#)” to ensure their proposal complies with all relevant standards.**

All unsuccessful applicant(s) will be informed if their proposal was not selected. Detailed reasons will not be given because of the number of applications received and resulting resource constraints. Decisions will be considered final and no further negotiations on non-approved proposals will be undertaken.

## V. FUNDING AND DURATION

**The research activity should conclude no later than 28 February 2026.** Proposals which exceed the funding limit and/or duration may be considered subject to merit and assessment but are not guaranteed on account of the high level of competition and limited availability of funds.

The Scheme will provide financial support of up to USD 10,000. Where a project is in partnership with an Australian organisation or individual, an additional USD 2,000 may be available, but is still subject to the financial guidelines which disallow payments to non-Cambodian nationals for services rendered and should rather be applied towards an expansion of research activities.

Grant funds may be used only for carrying out the research activity for which the grant has been awarded. Grant activities may not be carried out by any other person or organisation other than the grant recipient without the prior approval of AAC. If there are any delays in implementation or changes in the proposed project components after the project has started then the grant recipient



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must inform AAC immediately. Any requests for deviation from the original proposal must be accompanied by justifiable reason(s) and the new proposed changes. In these cases, AAC will review the project with the grantee(s) and advise whether it will continue to support the project and in what form in its absolute discretion. In the event that AAC determines that it will not continue to support the project, **any unexpended funds must be returned to AAC within 30 days**. If AAC is not informed immediately, it may seek to recover funds from the grantee(s). At the completion of the activity a Completion Report and a Final Financial Statement acquitting the funds against the budget must be provided.

Failure to commence the research activity by the agreed start date without valid justification may result in the withdrawal of the grant.

The grant may be used as a counterpart to other grants provided by local or foreign organisations. Scheme funds are to be fully acquitted and the grantee is expected to maintain sound administrative and financial systems capable of providing evidence of actual expenditure, delivery of activities, services and goods purchased.

**All applicants must read and understand the associated [Research Grant Financial Guidelines](#) which clarify eligible uses for funding within the context of the Scheme.**

## VI. OTHER PROVISIONS

### Support for Alumni

AAC may provide support for the grantee(s) as deemed necessary. Following the Embassy/DFAT's approval of grants, AAC will provide successful applicants with training (either face-to-face or online) on financial management, reporting, and other critical areas. During the grants implementation, AAC will also establish a regular meeting schedule where grantees update on their implementation progress, and share issues to assist other grantees.

### Grant Promotion and Australian Identity

Alumni Research Grants Scheme information is published on the AAC website, AAC Facebook, AAC Telegram, AAC LinkedIn, and other relevant platforms managed by AAC. Successful grant projects and their results are promoted through these and other media channels and at relevant alumni events. Grantees must acknowledge the Australian Government's support of their projects appropriately. This acknowledgment includes text and verbal acknowledgment in all grant project communication materials, as specified in AAC's Communications Guidelines for Grantees. These materials include project signs, publications, reports, events, backdrops, standees, leaflets, presentation slides, videos, websites, social media, media releases, speeches and interviews. Grantees should contact AAC for specific guidance prior to publication and public presentations.

AAC requests grantees to provide suitable photographs, video footage and other relevant materials for AAC promotional activities and encourages grantees to publicise project activities through their own networks.

See AAC's Communication Guidelines for Grantees for further information.

### Fraud

AAC has a zero tolerance policy on fraud. Fraud is described as "dishonestly obtaining a benefit by deception or other means." The scheme strictly adheres to DFAT's Fraud Control Policy and the Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines with a "zero—tolerance" to any form of fraudulent activity. This means that the scheme will not condone any form of fraudulent behavior in its operations such as payment of bribes, facilitation payments or "hidden" commissions for any reason.



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Further information is contained in the [Research Grant Financial Guidelines](#)

### Child Protection

AAC has a zero tolerance policy towards the exploitation of children and is committed to implementing internationally-recognised child protection compliance standards to protect children from exploitation and abuse. Grantees and any associates engaged in the grant activity must comply with the [DFAT Child Protection Policy](#) which sets standards for personal behaviour and must understand their obligation to manage risks to children and act accordingly.

Applications which propose working directly with children must have a clearly articulated and functional child protection plan in place. This plan shall be provided to AAC prior to commencement of the research. The child protection plan shall include procedures for protecting children in the proposed activity, among other things, from any potential sexual, mental, and physical abuse by any researchers or other individuals involved in the activity.

See the Communications Guidelines for requirements when filming or photographing children, including the form of consent.

A current criminal record check, in accordance with the DFAT Child Protection Policy, must be provided by the grant applicant and team members, where the grant activity involves working *with children, or contact with children*<sup>2</sup>

### Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)

AAC has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. This policy applies to AAC's and its partners' activities, including grantees. Grantees must comply with DFAT's Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy - [pseah-policy.pdf](#)

Grantees are responsible for immediately notifying AAC if any person engaged in grant activity is accused of, charged with, or convicted of criminal offences relating to child exploitation and abuse, and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

### Terrorism Financing Risks

The grantee/s must ensure that funds provided under a grant do not provide direct or indirect support or resources to:

- (a) organisations and/or individuals associated with terrorism, and
- (b) organisations and individuals for whom Australia has imposed sanctions under: the *Charter of the United Nations Act 1945* (Cth) and regulations made under that Act; the *Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011* (Cth) and regulations made under that Act or the World Bank List or a Relevant List.

**World Bank List** means a list of organisations maintained by the World Bank in its "Listing of Ineligible Firms" or "Listings of Firms, Letters of Reprimand" posted at: <http://web.worldbank.org>

**Relevant List** means any similar list to the World Bank List maintained by any other donor of development funding.

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#### <sup>2</sup> Definitions:

- *Working with Children*: Means being engaged in an activity with a child, where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working includes volunteering or other unpaid works.
- *Contact with Children*: Working on an activity, or in a position, that involves or may involve contact with children, either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment.



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### Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest can occur when individuals or organisations involved in grantmaking fail to adhere to ethical standards and have personal, professional, or financial stakes in the results.

Actual/apparent or perceived conflicts of interest can be damaging to the Australian government, AAC and its personnel, potential grantees and grantees.

A conflict of interest arises where a person makes a decision or exercises a power in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either material personal interests (financial or non-financial) or material personal associations. A conflict of interest may arise:

- where AAC team members or DFAT officials involved in administration of the research grants have a direct or indirect interest, which may influence the selection of a particular grant activity; or
- where a potential grantee has a direct or indirect interest, which may influence the selection of their proposed grant activity during the application process.

Conflicts may arise at any stage including during the selection process or while the grant activity is being undertaken.

An actual/apparent conflict occurs when an AAC or DFAT employee:

- is responsible for decisions, approval, recommendations, or disapproval of a grant concerning an immediate family member or a spouse/partner.
- solicits or accepts a fee, commission, gift or any other item of value from a prospective grantee.

A perceived conflict occurs when an AAC or DFAT employee or takes actions in relation to grants that create the appearance that they are:

- using their position for private gain.
- giving special treatment to any person.
- losing complete independence or objectivity.
- making an official decision outside official channels.
- affecting, in a negative way, the public's confidence in the integrity of the program.

All applicants for a grant must complete the conflicts of interest declaration in the Research Grants Round 5 Application Form.

### Record Keeping

The grantee/s shall ensure that records including all official forms and templates, minutes of evaluation proceedings and related meetings reports (e.g. progress, terminal, acquittals) are properly maintained and kept. This allows easy and ready access of records should the requirement for an audit arise.

### Complaints and appeal

Feedback, inquiries and complaints in relation to the processing and selection of applications should be made in writing and sent to [alumni@australiaawardscambodia.org](mailto:alumni@australiaawardscambodia.org).



## VII. APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Application Stage	Date (Indicative)
Call for proposals	10 January 2025
Deadline for applications	28 March 2025
Assessment of Applications	April 2025
Notification of results	April/May 2025
Commencement of activity	April/May 2025 (subject to negotiation with grantee)

The template for proposal submissions documents can be found by clicking on the hyperlink provided below:

1. [Alumni Research Grants Application - Round 5](#)
2. [Alumni Research Grant Financial Budget & Report Template \(Grant\)R5](#)
3. [Alumni Research Grants Workplan Timeline and Activity Scheduling Template - Round 5.](#)
4. [Declaration - Criminal Record Checks](#)
5. [Confirmation of Grant Activity-Anti-Fraud Template](#)

and other related documents can be found by clicking on the hyperlink provided below:

1. [Alumni Research Grants Financial Guidelines - Round 5](#)
2. [Alumni Research Grants Communications Guidelines - Round 5](#)
3. [AAC Research Grant Agreement template](#)
4. [Consent Form – Khmer](#)
5. [Consent Form - blank name and signature – English](#)

All Proposals must be submitted to [alumni@australiaawardscambodia.org](mailto:alumni@australiaawardscambodia.org)

## VIII. FURTHER INFORMATION

For any further enquiries, please contact:

Alumni Engagement Manager

Email: [alumni@australiaawardscambodia.org](mailto:alumni@australiaawardscambodia.org)  
[lina.khoun@australiaawardscambodia.org](mailto:lina.khoun@australiaawardscambodia.org)

Phone: +855 12 635 306 / +855 15 301 127

*Note that AAC reserves the right to not proceed with the above and is not liable for any costs incurred by individuals/group in preparing their application.*