



ABSTUDY Boarding School Scholarships

This factsheet provides information to secondary boarding schools who may be interested in offering boarding school scholarships to Indigenous students.

Benefits of getting a scholarship approved for ABSTUDY

Benefits for students

The purpose of ABSTUDY assistance for students who are awarded a boarding school scholarship is to substantially extend their access to education and improve their education outcomes.

Indigenous students may be approved for ABSTUDY away from home entitlements on the basis of being offered an approved scholarship by a boarding school, without having to meet the usual travel time/distance requirements.

This includes funding for interstate travel if the scholarship school is not located in the student's home state.

Benefits for boarding schools

Where a secondary student is entitled to ABSTUDY away from home entitlements, their entitlement may be paid directly to the boarding school and/or boarding provider.

This means that any boarding or school fees above those covered by the scholarship may be covered by the student's ABSTUDY away from home entitlements.

Depending on family circumstance and parental income testing, ABSTUDY away from home entitlements can be up to \$26,940 per year (as at 20 March 2019), to help pay the costs of tuition and boarding.

This includes:

- **Living Allowance**, along with the Energy Supplement, Rent Assistance and Remote Area Allowance up to a maximum of \$16,102 (subject to income testing), to cover the annual cost of **boarding fees**, and
- **School Fees Allowance**, up to a maximum of \$10,838 (subject to income testing as applicable), which includes the non-means tested component of \$8,422 and means tested component of \$2,416, to cover the annual cost of **school fees**.

If a student's ABSTUDY away from home entitlement increases during the scholarship period (e.g. due to a change in parental income), the boarding school can reduce the annual scholarship amount to take into account any additional ABSTUDY entitlement the student has become eligible for. This is conditional on the scholarship value still meeting the criteria for the approval of boarding school scholarships, outlined below.

Criteria for approval of boarding school scholarships

For a boarding school scholarship to be approved for ABSTUDY purposes:

- the school must be an approved secondary school offering an approved course of secondary studies,
- the boarding arrangements must be an integral part of the school, and
- the school must contribute a minimum scholarship value of \$6,000 in 2019 (indexed to Consumer Price Index), or a minimum 25 per cent of the school's annual boarding school and tuition fees (including public school voluntary contributions), whichever is greater.

Changes from 1 January 2019

From 1 January 2019, changes were introduced to the criteria for the approval of boarding school scholarships. These changes mean that:

- schools no longer need to have a particular socio-economic status (SES) score,
- the scholarship no longer needs to be recognised by the local Indigenous Education Consultative Body, and
- the minimum scholarship value for approval under ABSTUDY is now set at \$6,000 (subject to indexation) or 25 per cent of the school's annual boarding and tuition fees, whichever is greater.

Offering boarding school scholarships

If your school offers a boarding school scholarship to an Indigenous student that meets the criteria above, the student needs to supply information about the scholarship with their ABSTUDY claim.

Each student who claims ABSTUDY on these grounds is required to provide proof of the receipt of the scholarship and the scholarship amount. The boarding school needs to supply this information to the student before they claim ABSTUDY on these grounds.

An ABSTUDY Approved Scholarship Confirmation Form is provided at **Attachment A**.

A de-identified sample school letter offering a boarding school scholarship is provided at **Attachment B**.

Top tip: *if your boarding school offers Indigenous students scholarships, you should confirm your scholarship is recognised by DHS.*