



ACACIA PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIPS

Connecting public school alumni with the next generation of students, so where you start never determines where you end up



Overview of Scholarship

The Acacia Fellowship is a Public Education Foundation initiative that pairs financial support with mentoring, skills development and real-world exposure for public school students entering Years 11 and 12. Developed in partnership with founder Jennifer Robinson, the program connects students with “Acacia Fellows” – successful public school alumni who fund a scholarship and, where possible, offer mentoring and advocacy over the two-year Fellowship.

Is this scholarship for you? It’s open to students currently attending participating public schools who are entering Year 11 at the start of the program and can show potential, motivation or commitment (not academic excellence alone), alongside financial, social, geographic or systemic barriers that could limit their transition to senior schooling and beyond.

Acacia Program Scholarships currently include:

- Ballarat, Victoria
- Glenrock Region, New South Wales
- Remote Western Australia
- Rural New South Wales
- Shoalhaven Region, New South Wales
- Sydney Central and Inner Metropolitan, New South Wales
- Conservatorium High School, New South Wales (Murray Kouri Scholarship)



Eligibility Criteria

To apply, students should be:

- Currently attending a participating public school and entering Year 11 at the start of the program (for list of schools, see page 10)
- Demonstrating potential, motivation, curiosity or commitment – not academic excellence alone
- Facing financial, social, geographic or systemic barriers that could limit access to opportunity without intervention
- Supported by their school as a student who will engage positively with program activities



Selection Process

Schools nominate scholars and assist them to apply. Applications are reviewed by a Panel, with successful students confirmed and matched to a Fellow based on region or alignment. Students and their families are then onboarded, a code of conduct is agreed, and a spending plan is established with the school before funds are distributed.

What is the Acacia Program?

Acacia is a two-year journey through Years 11 and 12. The scholarship funding is only the starting point – the real value comes from the mentoring, skills and real-world experiences that surround it, all designed to help you make confident, informed choices about your future.

Five pillars work together across your two years:

- **Financial support** – funding toward the things that help you learn
- **Mentoring and alumni engagement** – you're matched with an Acacia Fellow and take part in one-on-one and group mentoring, plus insight sessions that open up advice and professional networks
- **Skills and career development workshops** – practical sessions in study skills, 21st Century skills, career coaching and job readiness that aren't always taught in class
- **Industry and community exposure** – excursions, "A Day in the Life" visits and sector panels that let you see real workplaces and imagine what's possible
- **A supportive school partnership** – your school, your Fellow and PEF work together to coordinate activities and look after your wellbeing throughout



What You'll Gain by the Time you Finish Year 12

- A clearer understanding of your strengths, interests and options
- Greater confidence in your academic and personal abilities
- A defined post-school pathway or a clear next-step plan
- Practical skills for study, training or employment – resumes, interviews and applications
- Connections to mentors, alumni and industry networks
- A stronger belief in your ability to succeed beyond school

Many scholars go on to become Fellows themselves, reaching back to support the next generation of public school students.

Funding/Assistance

- \$2,000 total contribution per student over two years (\$1,000 per year)
- Funds are paid to the student by prepaid Visa card and sent to the school for distribution
- Each Fellow is paired with a student from their former school or local region
- Continued payments depend on confirmed enrolment and the school-agreed spending plan being followed
- Any unspent funds roll over to the next school year

Acceptable Use of Scholarship Funds

Approved expenses must support the student's education, learning experience, wellbeing or access to enrichment opportunities. Acceptable uses include:

- Digital learning and equipment – laptops, tablets, software, internet access
- Compulsory school expenses – subject fees, textbooks, study materials, uniforms
- Enrichment – camps, excursions, workshops, conferences, competitions
- Learning environment – desk, chair, lighting, headphones
- Tuition support – tutoring, specialist learning support

[PEF Scholarship Funds Usage Guidelines](#) will be provided to each scholarship recipient and their school.



Application Form

- Schools are encouraged to nominate scholars directly
- Students are required to apply online

The following are typically confirmed:

- Confirmation of Year 11 enrolment at a public school
- Evidence of the barriers or hardship affecting the student's transition to senior study
- School support and endorsement of the student's engagement and involvement
- Student induction, including agreement to the program code of conduct
- A spending plan agreed between the student and the school



How to Apply

Not sure which scholarships you're eligible for? Complete the Eligibility Quiz to see all scholarships that may apply to you. Apply online via [PEF-Apply](#). You will need to sign up before you can access the application form. Make sure all sections are complete before you submit.

Submitting Your Application

- Applications open: June 2026
- Applications close: September 2026

You can save your application in progress and return to it at any time before the closing date. Once you click Submit, your application is sent to the Public Education Foundation and will be reviewed during the Panel assessment period. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in December.

Further Information and Contact Details

For further information, please contact the Public Education Foundation Scholarships team:

- Email: scholarships@publiceducationfoundation.org.au
- Phone: 02 7814 2806

Participating Schools – 2027*

- Ballarat, Victoria
 - Ballarat High School, Mount Clear College, Mount Rowan Secondary College, Phoenix P-12 Community School, Woodmans Hill Secondary College
- Glenrock Region, New South Wales
 - Hunter Sports High School, Kotara High School, Whitebridge High School
- Remote Western Australia
 - East Pilbara, Goldfields, Kimberley, Mid-West, West Pilbara
- Rural New South Wales
 - Balranald Central School, Barham High School, Deniliquin High School, Finley High School, Tooleybuc Central School
 - Broken Hill High School, Coomealla High School, Menindee Central School, School of the Air, Wilcannia Central School, Willyana High School
- Shoalhaven Region, New South Wales
 - Bombaderry High School, Kiama High School, Nowra High School, Shoalhaven High School, Ulladulla High School, Vincentia High School

* Schools may be added during the application period, please refer to website for updates