

# HDR Research Training Program and Other Scholarships Procedure

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## Purpose

This procedure documents the management of higher degree by research (HDR) scholarships. It applies to candidates enrolled in HDR courses offered by the University of Tasmania (the University) their supervisors, and academic unit of enrolment.

This procedure does not apply to undergraduate and postgraduate coursework programs or higher doctoral degrees.

## Applicable governance instruments

Instrument	Section	Principles
<i>Research Training Ordinance</i>		
<i>Research Training Policy</i>	1 Admissions and enrolment	1.1
	2 Higher degree research scholarships	2.1-2.2
	4 Candidature progression, development, and completion	4.2
<i>Research Policy</i>	2 Responsible conduct of research	2.1-2.2
<i>Compliance Policy</i>	2 Conflict of interest	2.1
<i>People Policy</i>	2 Inclusion, diversity, and equity	2.2
<i>Data and Information Governance Policy</i>	1 Privacy	1.1
<a href="#"><u>Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2017</u></a>		

## Procedure

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The main type of financial support available to HDR candidates is in the form of scholarships. There are scholarships available to cover some or all the following;
  - a) living allowance
  - b) tuition fees
  - c) relocation allowance
- 1.2. Scholarships are allocated competitively based on academic merit, experience, prior learning and other relevant attainments. Priority is given to new candidates in strategic research areas.
- 1.3. Commonwealth guidance can be found at the Department of Education and Training *Research Training Program (RTP)* FAQs for Administrators and Department of Education and Training RTP FAQs for Students.
- 1.4. Current university rates and information on available scholarships and projects are found on the [University Website](#).

## 2. General principles

- 2.1. To be defined as a scholarship, funding to support an HDR candidate will:
  - a) normally be advertised
  - b) be awarded competitively to an applicant based on merit against selection criteria that are normally publicly accessible, and
  - c) be primarily for educational purposes.
- 2.2. The University will recognise three types of merit-based and competitive arrangements to support HDR candidates. For the purposes of this procedure, an award is a scholarship or group of scholarships that may include a:
  - a) stipend (living allowance scholarship and any applicable allowances), and/or
  - b) fees offset (tuition fee scholarship excluding Student Services and Amenities Fees), and/or
  - c) top-up scholarship (see section 5.4 below).
- 2.3. All scholarships offered by the University will be administered according to relevant legislation, funding agreements, procedures and conditions of awards relating to each scholarship.
- 2.4. Individual Conditions of Award for scholarships administered by the University will be maintained and reviewed annually and will normally be made publicly available on the website.
- 2.5. Conditions of Awards will include details of:
  - a) eligibility requirements
  - b) support available
  - c) stipend rate
  - d) period of support
  - e) provision for paid and unpaid leave
  - f) undertaking employment outside of the research program
  - g) arrangements for optional work-integrated learning activities, and
  - h) termination or award provisions.
- 2.6. Conditions of Awards will be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Research (Pro Vice-Chancellor) to ensure equity and consistency with the minimum requirements as set out in this procedure.
- 2.7. The University will pay a candidate in receipt of an award (otherwise known as the award holder) the entitlement(s) under the award, as stated in the Conditions of Award.
- 2.8. The base stipend rate means the minimum stipend value set by the University which may differ from the minimum RTP stipend rate set by the Commonwealth Government.

## 3. Research Training Program

- 3.1. Under provisions of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, the University will receive and be responsible for administering a block grant to support RTP scholarships.
- 3.2. RTP scholarships will be available to domestic and international candidates undertaking a Masters by Research or Doctoral Degree.

- 3.3. An RTP scholarship awarded by the University may include an:
  - a) RTP stipend paid to candidates to assist with their living costs while undertaking an HDR;
  - b) RTP fees offset to meet the liability for tuition fees; and
  - c) RTP allowance paid to candidates to assist with relocation costs to undertake an HDR.
- 3.4. An RTP stipend is a living allowance scholarship awarded on a competitive basis to assist a candidate with their living costs while undertaking an HDR.
- 3.5. An RTP Fees Offset Scholarship will be awarded to all domestic HDR candidates enrolled at the University.
- 3.6. An RTP Fees Offset Scholarship may be awarded to international HDR candidates on a competitive basis.

#### **4. Tasmania Graduate Research Scholarship**

- 4.1. The University will fund the Tasmania Graduate Research Scholarship (TGRS) to support its strategic research objectives.
- 4.2. The TGRS is a stipend paid to candidates to assist with their living costs while undertaking an HDR.
- 4.3. The TGRS will be awarded to high-achieving domestic and international applicants/candidates to undertake research projects aligned to the research strategy of the University and who meet the requisite competitive requirements in accordance with the *HDR Admissions, Selection & Enrolment Procedure*.

#### **5. Other scholarships**

- 5.1. Sources of co-funding may be internal or external to the University.
- 5.2. Colleges may offer International Tuition Fee Scholarships to eligible international HDR applicants to fully or partially offset published international tuition fees. An International Tuition Fee Scholarship is a type of fees offset as set out in section 2.2.b).
- 5.3. A top-up scholarship will only be awarded to a candidate who has been offered, or is already in receipt of, a base stipend. The top-up will not exceed 75% of the value of their annual base stipend. A candidate may receive multiple top-ups provided the cumulative total will not exceed 75% of their annual base stipend rate.
- 5.4. The period of support provided for a top-up scholarship may be different from the period of support provided for a base stipend and will normally conclude no later than the end date of the base stipend. Unless stated otherwise, top-up scholarships do not include paid leave entitlements.
- 5.5. Any person or group within or external to the University may propose a stipend be established, provided the minimum stipend rate and conditions are equal to the University RTP stipend rate and conditions. Other sources of funding for scholarships include:
  - a) competitive grant funding that includes a stipend;
  - b) industry/partner funded stipend; and/or
  - c) college funded stipend.

- 5.6. The University will accept donor funding from members of the community to build support for scholarships. Donor-funded scholarships will be managed by the Advancement Office in conjunction with the Graduate Research Office (GRO).
- 5.7. If the conditions of a specific scholarship or its name or value are incompatible with University policy and procedure, or become impractical, the Research Division will consult with the relevant college to achieve compatibility with the RTP stipend rate and conditions.
- 5.8. The University will not accept scholarship funding from persons or organisations that may diminish the reputation of the University or expose the University to unreasonable risk. The University reserves the right to withdraw scholarship funding agreements on these grounds.

## 6. Scholarship value

- 6.1. The value of full-time RTP minimum and maximum stipend rates will be determined by the [Commonwealth Government](#) and will be published annually.
- 6.2. The RTP stipend will be offered at a rate determined by the University annually, and that rate will match or exceed the Commonwealth Government RTP minimum stipend rate.
- 6.3. The TGRS stipend will be offered at the same rate as the RTP stipend.
- 6.4. The base stipend rate of other full-time stipends will be equivalent to the full-time University base stipend rate and will be no greater than the full-time maximum RTP stipend rate as determined by the [Commonwealth Government](#), with the exception of externally funded scholarships (see section 6.5).
- 6.5. The maximum stipend rate for externally funded scholarships may exceed the maximum RTP stipend rate on recommendation from the Pro Vice-Chancellor and with approval from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research.
- 6.6. Full-time stipends that meet Australian Taxation Office requirements are tax exempt.
- 6.7. A candidate who is enrolled on a part-time basis and meets the eligibility criteria within the Conditions of Award to hold a part-time award will receive a stipend of 50% of the full-time rate. Part-time awards are not tax exempt. Applications for part-time awards and candidature will be made in accordance with the *HDR Admissions, Selection & Enrolment Procedure* or the *HDR Candidature Management & Enrolment Variation Procedure* and is subject to review and approval by the Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- 6.8. The value of the RTP and TGRS allowances included within the Conditions of Award can be viewed on the University Graduate Research scholarship [website](#).

## 7. Duration

- 7.1. An RTP, TGRS or other stipend may be awarded for:
  - a) a maximum of 3.5 years full-time (or part-time equivalent) for candidates enrolled in a doctoral degree; or
  - b) a maximum of two years full-time (or part-time equivalent) for candidates enrolled in a masters by research.
- 7.2. An RTP fees offset or International Tuition Fee Scholarship fees offset may be awarded for:
  - a) a maximum of 4 years full-time (or part-time equivalent) for candidates enrolled in a doctoral degree; or

- b) a maximum of two years full-time (or part-time equivalent) for candidates enrolled in a masters by research.
- 7.3. An RTP fees offset or ITFS fees offset will be extended by the duration of any leave of absence taken and may be extended as part of an extension approved according to the *HDR Candidature Management & Enrolment Variation Procedure*.
- 7.4. The duration of a scholarship and, where applicable, the conditions under which a scholarship may be extended, will be stated in the Conditions of Award for that scholarship.
- 7.5. The duration of a stipend or fees offset will be:
  - a) reduced by any periods of study undertaken towards the degree prior to commencement of the award or during suspension of the award; and
  - b) increased by any periods of approved paid medical or paid parental leave.
- 7.6. A candidate who exceeds the maximum duration of their RTP fees offset of International Tuition Fee Scholarship may be liable for full tuition fees at the published rate for their course for the period following their maximum duration until the thesis is submitted for examination.
- 7.7. Tuition Fee rates will be available on the [website](#).

## 8. Part-time awards

- 8.1. To be eligible to hold a part-time award, a candidate will demonstrate they have primary caring commitments or a medical condition that precludes full-time study, as outlined in their Conditions of Award.
- 8.2. Under exceptional circumstances, requests for part-time awards while employed part-time may be considered by the Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- 8.3. A part-time candidate who is working full-time will not be eligible to hold a part-time award.

## 9. Advertising of scholarships

- 9.1. All available scholarships will normally be advertised on the University website.
- 9.2. HDR supervisors who seek to advertise a project with a linked stipend and/or top-up scholarship will submit a *Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Project Approval* form.

## 10. Eligibility for RTP, TGRS and other scholarships

- 10.1. Eligibility requirements for scholarships other than an RTP and TGRS will be detailed in the relevant funding or head agreement and/or in the Conditions of Award.
- 10.2. To be eligible for an RTP or TGRS stipend a candidate will not receive income from another source to support that candidate's general living costs while undertaking their course of study if that income is greater than 75% of the annual University RTP or TGRS stipend rate. Income unrelated to the candidate's course of study or income received for the candidate's course of study but not for the purpose of supporting general living costs will not be taken into account.
- 10.3. If a candidate receives another scholarship or award related to their course of study for the purpose of supporting general living costs that is greater than 75% of their annual base stipend, they may apply to suspend their award in accordance with the Conditions of Award.
- 10.4. A full-time or part-time candidate undertaking full-time work will not be permitted to hold a

stipend, except where approval has been granted under section 8.2.

- 10.5. To be eligible for an RTP fees offset or International Tuition Fee Scholarship a candidate will not be in receipt of an equivalent award or scholarship designed to offset HDR fees.
- 10.6. Candidates will be responsible for ensuring they continue to meet the eligibility criteria and conditions for all awards they receive and will notify the University when their eligibility changes.

## 11. Application and selection

- 11.1. Prospective and current candidates will apply for a stipend and/or fees offset scholarship through the approved application process in accordance with the *HDR Admissions, Selection & Enrolment Procedure*.
- 11.2. Current candidates may apply for an RTP or TGRS stipend, will be assessed in line with alleligible applicants, and are not prioritised.
- 11.3. Applicants for:
  - a) a RTP or TGRS will be assessed by the School Scholarship Assessment Committee for scholarships included in advertised rounds. This assessment will then be reviewed by the College Scholarship Assessment Committee. Committee membership is set out in *Schedule A: School and College Scholarship Assessment Committees Membership*
  - b) any other scholarship will be assessed by a selection committee of at least three (3) members with membership prescribed at the discretion of the fund manager or equivalent.
- 11.4. School and College Scholarship Assessment Committees will declare any conflicts of interest in relation to applicants being considered as set out in the *Conflicts of Interest and Gifts and Benefits Declaration Procedure*. The Chair of each committee will record and manage any declared conflicts in the meeting notes.
- 11.5. Selection recommendations will consider the eligibility and selection criteria specified in the relevant conditions of the award and scholarship advertisement.
- 11.6. The Pro Vice-Chancellor will approve or reject the recommendation.
- 11.7. An offer of a scholarship will be made in writing in accordance with the *HDR Admissions, Selection & Enrolment Procedure* and include:
  - a) a copy of the Conditions of Award;
  - b) advice on the types of assistance and support being offered;
  - c) the conditions and period of support of the stipend; and
  - d) the estimated annual value of the award.
- 11.8. An applicant who accepts a scholarship offer will agree to the relevant Conditions of Award.
- 11.9. An offer of a scholarship may be withdrawn by the University where an applicant does not meet the conditions of that scholarship by the date specified in the letter of offer.

## 12. Commencement of award

- 12.1. An award will commence:
  - a) for a commencing candidate on the date of their enrolment, or
  - b) for a current candidate on the date stipulated in their letter of offer.

- 12.2. Where an award holder requests to commence offshore, approval will be sought from the Pro Vice-Chancellor. Offshore payments will not normally be approved.
- 12.3. Where an HDR applicant is not able to start their degree by the specified date, if the scholarship conditions allow, they may request to delay the commencement date. Requests to delay the date of commencement should be submitted in line with the *HDR Admissions, Selection & Enrolment Procedure*.

### **13. Payments and employment**

- 13.1. To receive award payments a candidate must have an Australian bank account. The University will make fortnightly stipend and/or top-up payments in arrears directly to this account.
- 13.2. Where a relocation allowance is included in an award, and to be eligible to claim this allowance, a candidate will have relocated to a University campus or an approved alternative location.
- 13.3. To claim a relocation allowance a candidate will submit a Relocation Claim form within six months of commencing the award.
- 13.4. Expenses for visa/s, accommodation, rental bond or meals incurred during the course of travel will not be reimbursed. Refer to the Conditions of Award for permissible expenses.

### **14. Work-integrated learning activities**

- 14.1. Optional industry placements, research internships, professional practice activities, or other similar enrichment activities may be undertaken as part of candidature.
- 14.2. A candidate may continue to receive their award during industry placements, research internships, professional practice activities or other similar enrichment activities where the activities are unpaid. If activities are paid, a stipend may continue if the income is 75% or less than the award holder's annual stipend rate as per section 10.3.
- 14.3. A candidate will seek a suspension from their stipend only when:
  - a) receiving income external to a scholarship above the allowable threshold as per section 14.2;
  - b) exceeding permitted hours of paid employment; or
  - c) as stipulated in the Conditions of Award as per Section 13.5.
- 14.4. Stipend payments will be paused during periods of suspension accessed in section 14.3 and will resume when the stipend suspension concludes. The award tenure will not be extended.

### **15. Research overseas or at other institutions**

- 15.1. A candidate who undertakes research overseas may continue to receive an award as specified in the Conditions of Award. Award payments will continue to be paid into the nominated Australian bank account.
- 15.2. Subject to the Conditions of Award, an award holder may be permitted to conduct part of the research at other organisations in accordance with the *Research Training Ordinance*.

## 16. Resources for candidates

- 16.1. Award holders will receive at least the minimum resources specified in the *HDR Admissions, Selection & Enrolment Procedure*.
- 16.2. Award holders will be supervised according to the *HDR Supervision & Academic Support Procedure*.

## 17. Variations to enrolment (variation of award entitlements)

- 17.1. An award holder may apply to vary the conditions of their candidature in accordance with *Research Training Ordinance*, the *HDR Candidature Management & Enrolment Variation Procedure* and the relevant Conditions of Award, provided they do so using the prescribed form and including supporting evidence (where required).
- 17.2. An award holder who is approved to change from full-time to part-time (or vice versa) as per the *HDR Candidature Management & Enrolment Variation Procedure* will have their award adjusted in accordance with their Conditions of Award:
  - a) Where stipend payments are permitted for part-time study, the stipend will be paid pro rata at 50% of the full-time rate. Part-time stipend payments are not tax exempt.
  - b) Where stipend payments are not permitted for part-time study, stipend payments will be suspended until an award holder returns to full-time study at which time stipend payments will recommence.
  - c) Where an award holder is no longer eligible to hold the stipend due to the nature of the variation of enrolment the stipend is terminated.
- 17.3. A candidate who is approved to transfer between research degrees within the University as per *HDR Candidature Management & Enrolment Variation Procedure* will have their award duration adjusted in accordance with section 7, with the revised duration based on the commencement date of their initial candidature and allowing for any periods of approved leave of absence.
- 17.4. Awards administered by the University will not normally be transferable to another institution unless stated in the relevant Conditions of Award, funding agreement, or head agreement.
- 17.5. When an RTP award holder transfers from another tertiary provider, the transferring HDR candidate will need to apply for an RTP Scholarship in accordance with section 11 of this procedure and their application will be considered on the same basis and by reference to the same selection criteria that apply to all other RTP applicants.
- 17.6. If an award holder transfers colleges within the University, their scholarship may be transferred to the new host college subject to approval from the Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- 17.7. A candidate transferring from the University to another institution may request a candidature statement outlining the candidate's RTP scholarship information.
- 17.8. An award holder may apply for an extension to their scholarship where an extension provision is included in the relevant Conditions of Award for that scholarship.

## 18. Annual and sick leave entitlements

- 18.1. An award holder is entitled to receive up to 20 working days paid annual leave and 10 working days paid sick leave for each year of the stipend. These leave entitlements are included in the maximum stipend duration and may be accrued over the life of the stipend but will be forfeited when the stipend is terminated.

### **19. Leave of absence (paid and unpaid)**

- 19.1. Award holders may apply for a leave of absence from candidature as per the *HDR Candidature Management & Enrolment Variation Procedure*. Normally the award will be suspended for the duration of the leave of absence unless the Conditions of Award include paid leave entitlements in addition to section 18.1.
- 19.2. Paid leave entitlements are available to award holders who meet the eligibility criteria as specified in their Conditions of Award.
- 19.3. Where permitted by the Conditions of Award and where an award holder can demonstrate exceptional circumstances in accordance with *Research Training Ordinance*, additional periods of unpaid leave of absence from the award may be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, and scholarship fund manager, if relevant.
- 19.4. The total cumulative period of unpaid leave of absence during the award's duration will not normally exceed 12 calendar months.
- 19.5. A candidate on a leave of absence will notify GRO of their return to candidature no less than 14 days prior to the approved date of return. Failure to do so may result in stipend payments being delayed or in an overpayment.

### **20. Suspension of award (without taking a leave of absence from candidature)**

- 20.1. Where permitted by the Conditions of Award, an award holder may apply to suspend their stipend during periods of enrolled candidature where they are temporarily ineligible to receive stipend payments in accordance with the relevant conditions of award.
- 20.2. The total cumulative period of award suspension will not normally exceed 12 calendar months.
- 20.3. Where permitted by the Conditions of Award and where the award holder can demonstrate exceptional circumstances, additional periods of award suspension may be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, and scholarship fund manager, if relevant.
- 20.4. Periods of study undertaken towards the degree during an award suspension will not be deducted from the maximum award duration.
- 20.5. Where an award is suspended for more than two calendar years, that award will be terminated.
- 20.6. A candidate who wishes to recommence a stipend must notify GRO no less than 14 days prior to the requested stipend recommencement date. Failure to do so may result in stipend payments being delayed.

### **21. Repayment, withdrawal and termination provisions**

- 21.1. The University and the candidate will exercise due diligence in the payment and receipt of an award to reduce anomalies including over and under payments.
- 21.2. Where a candidate has been underpaid, the University will back pay monies owing in the next available pay cycle.
- 21.3. The University will be entitled to recover money owed by a candidate arising from payment of a scholarship or allowance to which the candidate is not entitled to. Before recovering that money, the University will:
  - a) provide to the candidate written details pertaining to that owing and the reasons for the debt;
  - b) make a reasonable attempt to reach agreement with the candidate on a suitable method of

repayment; and

c) provide to the candidate written details of the repayment arrangements.

21.4. An award holder who receives an over payment of a stipend will be required to repay monies within 4 weeks of receiving notice of the overpayment. Any overpayment will be recovered by:

a) a reduction in stipend duration;

b) a payment plan; or

c) payment in full by the candidate.

21.5. Where a candidate who is receipt of an award withdraws from their course, the candidate will be required to repay monies received after the effective withdrawal date where the:

a) candidate failed to notify GRO of their intention to withdraw; or

b) withdrawal is backdated to a time prior to notifying GRO that they have withdrawn.

21.6. An award holder may relinquish a scholarship at any time by notifying GRO in writing that they no longer require the support.

21.7. An award will be terminated on the day a thesis is submitted for examination or at the end of the award duration end date, whichever is earlier.

21.8. An award will be terminated before this time where the award holder:

a) ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in the Conditions of Award other than during a period of approved leave of absence;

b) does not commence by the specified date;

c) cannot continue as a result of death, incapacitation or withdrawing from the course;

d) does not resume study following a period of approved leave of absence or fails to make arrangements to extend that leave of absence;

e) takes unapproved leave from their candidature with no response to attempts at communication by the University;

f) has not complied with the requirements of this procedure, the conditions of their candidature, or the other policies of the University, or for international students, maintained a valid visa to remain in Australia;

g) has been found to have committed serious academic or research misconduct, including, but not limited to the provision of false or misleading information;

h) fails to make satisfactory academic progress and candidature is terminated; or

i) is enrolled in any other academic course of study leading to a qualification that is not an essential part of their HDR program.

21.9. If an award is to be terminated in accordance with section 21.8 of this procedure, the award holder will be notified in writing and, prior to any such termination, shall be provided with an opportunity to appeal in accordance with their Conditions of Award.

## **22. Acknowledgement of RTP scholarship**

22.1. A candidate who receives any type of RTP scholarship must acknowledge the Commonwealth's contribution to their work in any published materials that relate to the research project carried out during their degree. This acknowledgement applies both during and after completion of the award

holder's HDR and the requirement extends to the candidate's supervisors or other parties who publish research arising from the candidate's work.

- 22.2. Published materials include items such as the thesis or exegesis, books, articles, newsletters, or other literary or artistic works which relate to an award holder's HDR project and include online materials such as blogs or wikis.
- 22.3. The acknowledgement must be in a prominent place and in an appropriate form. The acknowledgement must mention that the award holder was supported by an "Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship".

### 23. Miscellaneous obligations

- 23.1. It is the responsibility of award holders to seek independent taxation advice in relation to any scholarship they have been awarded.

### Related procedures

*HDR Admissions, Selection and Enrolment Procedure*

*HDR Candidature Management and Enrolment Variation Procedure*

*HDR Supervision and Academic Support Procedure*

*Conflict of Interest and Gifts and Benefits Declarations Procedure*

### Versions

<a href="#">Version</a>	Action	Approval Authority	Responsible Officer/s	Approval Date
1	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Dean of Graduate Research	1 Dec 2020
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3	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Dean of Graduate Research	9 May 2023
4	Minor amendments approved	Director Governance and Compliance	Pro Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Research	19 January 2024
5	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Pro Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Research	7 May 2024

### Definitions

[candidate](#) | [part-time](#) | [Scholarship](#)

### Schedule A: School and College Scholarship Assessment Committee Membership

School Scholarship Assessment Committee membership:

- Associate Head of Research (Chair);
- at least one Graduate Research Coordinator for the academic unit; and
- at least one other academic member of the academic unit.

College Scholarship Assessment Committee membership:

- College Associate Dean Research Performance or nominee (Chair);
- at least one representative Graduate Research Coordinator from the college; and
- at least one representative Associate Head of Research (or nominee), discipline leader or research chair from the college.

Where an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person is being considered for a scholarship, a representative from the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Aboriginal Leadership) should be consulted by the Assessment Committees.