

Research Training Program Scholarship Policy

Section 1 - Audience

(1) This policy applies to University of Newcastle (University) Research Training Program (RTP) scholarship applicants and recipients.

Section 2 - Executive Summary

(2) The University administers the RTP on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, who provides block grant funds to support domestic and international students undertaking higher degrees by research (HDR). The University distributes the funds as RTP scholarships.

(3) RTP scholarships may include RTP Fees Offsets, RTP Stipends and RTP Allowances.

Section 3 - Purpose

(4) This policy has been developed in response to the Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2017.

(5) This policy provides a comprehensive referral point for RTP applicants and scholarship recipients.

(6) This policy applies to the University's RTP funded scholarships.

Section 4 - Relaxation Clause

(7) To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in a particular case, the Dean of Graduate Research may relax any provision of this policy, except those specifically expressed as conditions as advised by the Department of Education and Training.

Section 5 - RTP Acknowledgement

(8) The Australian Government's contribution must be acknowledged when the recipient of an RTP Scholarship, their supervisor or any other party publishes or produces material, such as books, articles, newsletters or other literary or artistic works which relate to research project carried out by the recipient of the RTP scholarship. This applies during and after the completion of the program of study.

(9) The Commonwealth's contribution must be acknowledged in a prominent place and in an appropriate form. The acknowledgement must include the mention of the student's support through an "Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship".

Section 6 - Basic Information

Part A - RTP Fees Offset

Eligibility

(10) Applicants who will be undertaking an approved Master Degree (Research) or Doctoral Degree (Research/Professional) at the University may apply for a scholarship where:

- a. the applicant is not already receiving a scholarship which includes course tuition under any other scholarship scheme to which the Australian Government makes a contribution; and
- b. for international applicants, the applicant is:
 - i. enrolled as a full-time candidate and is compliant with international student visa requirements as specified by Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP); and
 - ii. commencing a HDR on campus, and will remain enrolled on campus for the majority of the degree (also refer to Section 10 Attendance).

Specific Eligibility

(11) Indigenous PhD Scholarship applicants must provide evidence of Australian Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Islander status as detailed in the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander – Establishing Status within the University Policy.

(12) Disability Support PhD Scholarship applicants must provide evidence of registration with UON AccessAbility by including:

- a. a copy of their Reasonable Adjustment Plan; or
- b. a letter from AccessAbility outlining the impact of their conditions/s on HDR study.

Periods of Support

(13) A full-time scholarship may be held for two years to support a full-time Master Degree (Research), or four years for a full-time Doctoral Degree (Research/Professional).

(14) If a scholarship is awarded to a scholar already undertaking a HDR program, the period of support will be reduced acknowledging the scholar's prior tenure.

Rate

(15) The rate applicable to each scholarship round is available on the Graduate Research website.

Part B - RTP Stipend

Eligibility

(16) Applicants to an approved Master Degree (Research) or Doctoral Degree (Research/Professional) at the University may apply for a scholarship where:

- a. they are enrolling as a full-time candidate or have approval from the Dean of Graduate Research to undertake part-time study;
- b. they are not receiving an equivalent scholarship, award or salary providing a benefit greater than 75% of the

RTP Stipend base rate to undertake the proposed program (income earned from sources unrelated to the program of study is not subject to the 75% rule);

- c. they will be enrolled on campus and will remain enrolled on campus for the majority of the degree (also refer to Section 17 Research activities at other organisations); and
- d. for international applicants, they are enrolling as a full-time candidate and are compliant with international student visa requirements as specified by DIBP.

Specific Eligibility

(17) Indigenous PhD Scholarship applicants must provide evidence of Australian Aboriginality and/or Torres Strait Islander status as detailed in the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander – Establishing Status within the University Policy.

(18) Disability Support PhD Scholarship applicants must provide evidence of registration with UON AccessAbility by including:

- a. a copy of their Reasonable Adjustment Plan; or
- b. a letter from AccessAbility outlining the impact of their conditions/s on HDR study.

Periods of Support

(19) A full-time scholarship may be held for two years to support a full-time Master Degree (Research) or three and a half years for a full-time Doctoral Degree (Research/Professional).

(20) Indigenous PhD Scholarships and Disability Support PhD Scholarships: Four years for a full-time Doctoral Degree (Research/Professional).

(21) If a scholarship is awarded to a scholar already undertaking a HDR program, the period of support will be reduced acknowledging the scholar's prior tenure.

Rate

(22) The rate applicable to each scholarship round is available on the Graduate Research website.

Part C - RTP Allowances

Relocation Allowance

Domestic Scholars

(23) Scholars from within Australia who relocate to within 50kms of their campus of study will be eligible for a relocation reimbursement of up to \$1,500. Claimable expenses upon production of tax invoices/receipts include:

- a. Travel to within 50kms of their campus of study equivalent to the economy or student airfare, for the scholar, spouse and dependents;
- b. Removalist expenses; and
- c. A pre-determined per claim for accommodation, meal costs, or direct petrol costs.

International Scholars

(24) The RTP Allowance provides a relocation allowance of \$1,500 to RTP scholars who relocate to within 50kms of their campus of study from an overseas country to take up their scholarship.

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

(25) is provided to RTP Stipend international scholars for the duration of their student visa. The scholar must advise UON Graduate Research of the departure date from Australia following thesis submission or award. OSHC will cease at cancellation of the Confirmation of Enrolment, or if a candidate withdraws or is terminated from their program of study.

Section 7 - Applications, Selection Process and Offers

Applications

(26) The Application process is available on the Graduate Research website.

Selection

(27) The Selection process applicable to each scholarship round is available in the Research Scholarship Guidelines on the Graduate Research website.

Offers

(28) Successful applicants will receive an offer via email to the email address stipulated on their application form or existing University email account.

Section 8 - Commencement

(29) The scholar must be enrolled in a HDR and commence the scholarship no later than the date specified in the scholarship offer. The offer will be forfeited if this condition is not met, unless deferral has been approved.

Section 9 - Supervision and facilities

(30) The University's [Code of Practice for Higher Degree by Research Candidature Policy](#) applies in relation to HDR supervision and facilities.

Section 10 - Attendance

Full-time

(31) A scholar must undertake an approved Master Degree (Research) or Doctoral Degree (Research/Professional) at the University upon commencement of the scholarship and enrol as a full-time candidate, unless the Dean of Graduate Research has approved part-time study.

Part-time

(32) The Dean of Graduate Research may approve a part-time scholarship to a domestic candidate where the applicant is able to demonstrate:

- a. carer responsibilities for a pre-school aged child;
- b. carer responsibilities for school-aged children as a sole parent with limited access to outside support;

- c. carer responsibilities for an invalid or disabled spouse, child or parent; or
- d. a medical condition that limits their capacity to undertake full-time study, supported by medical certification.

(33) The Australian Government ESOS Act specifies that international candidates with a Student Visa cannot study on a part-time basis in Australia, and will not be awarded a scholarship on a part-time basis.

Section 11 - Leave

(34) All types of leave must be discussed with, and approved by, the relevant supervisor.

(35) RTP Stipend with RTP Fees Offset and RTP Allowances

Annual Leave

(36) Scholars are entitled to up to 20 working days paid annual leave each year calculated on a pro-rata basis within the period of the scholarship. This may be accrued over the tenure of the scholarship.

Sick Leave

(37) RTP Stipend with RTP Fees Offset and RTP Allowances scholars are entitled to up to 10 working days paid sick leave each year calculated on a pro-rata basis within the period of the scholarship. This may be accrued over the tenure of the scholarship.

(38) Sick leave entitlements may also be used by scholars with family responsibilities, to care for sick children or relatives.

(39) For periods of illness lasting longer than 10 working days and where there is medical certification confirming the illness, scholars may receive up to a total of 60 working days paid sick leave in addition to the normal duration of the scholarship

(40) Applications for sick leave exceeding the 10 working days' provision must be accompanied by medical certification and submitted to UON Graduate Research prior to the scholarship expiry date.

Parental Leave

(41) RTP Stipend with RTP Fees Offset and RTP Allowances scholars who are primary carers may receive up to 60 working days paid parental leave for childbirth or adoption occurring within the tenure of the stipend scholarship.

(42) Periods of paid parental leave are in addition to the normal duration of the stipend period.

(43) All applications for parental leave must be accompanied by medical/adoption certification and submitted within the tenure of the stipend scholarship.

(44) Paid parental leave is not available within the first 12 months of the scholarship.

(45) Unpaid parental leave may be applied for as Leave of Absence under this policy.

Partner Leave

(46) RTP Stipend with RTP Fees Offset and RTP Allowances scholars who are partners may receive up to 10 working days paid partner leave for a childbirth or adoption occurring within the tenure of the stipend scholarship.

(47) Paid partner leave must be taken during the three-week period prior to the expected birth or placement of the child, or up to six months after the actual birth or placement of the child.

(48) Periods of paid partner leave are in addition to the normal duration of the stipend period.

(49) All applications for partner leave must be accompanied by medical/adoption certification and submitted within the tenure of the stipend scholarship.

(50) Paid partner leave is not available within the first 12 months of a scholarship.

Unused Leave

(51) Any unused leave will be forfeited when the scholarship is completed or terminated.

Leave Entitlements for Part-time Scholars

(52) A part-time RTP Stipend with RTP Fees Offset and RTP Allowances scholar is expected to progress at half the rate of a full-time scholar and therefore receives approximately half of the leave entitlements listed above for each year of study.

Section 12 - Leave of Absence

(53) Periods of approved leave of absence will not be deducted from the overall scholarship tenure.

RTP Fees Offset

(54) After 12 months' full time equivalent, a scholar may apply to the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor or nominee for a leave of absence of scholarship for a period of up to 12 months during the tenure of the scholarship.

(55) For Doctoral Degree (Research/Professional) scholars only: any leave of absence applications exceeding 12 months during the tenure of the scholarship can only be approved by the Dean of Graduate Research where the scholar can demonstrate exceptional circumstances beyond the scholar's control. The maximum period of any further extension will be 12 months.

RTP Stipend with RTP Fees Offset and RTP Allowances

(56) After 12 months' full time equivalent, a scholar may apply to the Dean of Graduate Research for a leave of absence of scholarship for a period of up to 12 months during the tenure of the scholarship.

(57) The Dean of Graduate Research will only approve any further leave of absence where the scholar can demonstrate exceptional circumstances beyond the scholar's control. The maximum period of any further extension will be 12 months.

International Scholars

(58) Leave of absence from scholarship may only be approved where the scholar can demonstrate exceptional circumstances beyond the scholar's control. The University is required to report to the DIBP in all such cases.

Section 13 - Employment

RTP Stipend with RTP Fees Offset and RTP Allowances

(59) Scholars must not undertake paid employment of more than eight hours per week within the hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday.

(60) Scholars are not required to undertake paid employment as a condition of the scholarship.

International Scholars

(61) A scholar with a student visa may not undertake employment that is inconsistent with the conditions of their visa.

Section 14 - Enrolment Variations

Transfer of Program Within the University

(62) A scholarship may be transferred to another program of study, subject to the scholar receiving formal approval for entry to that program by the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor or nominee and the Dean of Graduate Research.

Variation of Study Load

(63) The Dean of Graduate Research may approve a request to alter a scholar's study load on application.

(64) Applications are considered on a case by case basis.

(65) Where the variation of study load is approved, the remaining period of scholarship is extended, or reduced on a pro rata basis.

Conversion of Program

(66) If the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor or nominee approves a conversion of candidature:

a. RTP Fees Offset

- i. A Master Degree (Research) scholar may upgrade to a Doctoral Degree (Research) program during the tenure of the scholarship. The RTP Fees Offset duration then becomes four years.
- ii. A Doctoral Degree (Research) scholar may convert to a Master Degree (Research) program during the tenure of the scholarship. The maximum RTP Fees Offset duration then becomes two years, including any previous tenure.

b. RTP Stipend with RTP Fees Offset and RTP Allowances

- i. A Master Degree (Research) scholar may upgrade to a Doctoral Degree (Research) program during the tenure of the scholarship. The stipend and allowances duration then becomes three and a half years.
- ii. A Doctoral Degree (Research) scholar may convert to a Master Degree (Research) program during the tenure of the scholarship. The maximum stipend and allowances duration then becomes two years, including any previous tenure.

Section 15 - Transfer of Scholarship

(67) Scholars who wish to transfer to another Higher Education Provider (HEP) should contact the HEP to determine if they may be awarded a scholarship at that institution.

(68) Scholars who wish to transfer to the University must provide information from the former HEP on the duration of the HDR tenure already consumed, including approved periods of leave. The Dean of Graduate Research will determine whether they may be awarded a scholarship at the University.

Section 16 - Temporary Cessation of Stipend

Payments

(69) RTP Stipend with RTP Fees Offset and RTP Allowances

(70) Where a scholar does not comply with clauses 16 (a), (b) and (c) or 59:

- a. Stipend payments will be forfeited; and
- b. The periods of study undertaken towards the degree during this time will be deducted from the maximum period of scholarship tenure.

Section 17 - Research Activities at Other Organisations

RTP Stipend with RTP Fees Offset and RTP Allowances

(71) Scholars may be eligible to continue to receive scholarship benefits during periods of research at other organisations in Australia or overseas, if the research is essential for the completion of the scholar's program and after the first six months of the scholarship.

(72) Research at another organisation is subject to the approval of the scholar's principal supervisor, the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor or nominee, and the Dean of Graduate Research.

(73) A period of research at another organisation should not exceed 12 months, unless a case for exceptional circumstances can be made.

Section 18 - Suspension of Scholarship

(74) Suspension of scholarship payments may occur if:

- a. Scholars do not enrol in their program of study by the census date for each semester.
- b. The Dean of Graduate Research believes on reasonable grounds that the scholar's study is affected by circumstances that prevent the scholar from pursuing the program.

Section 19 - Termination

International Scholars

(75) Scholarship benefits will be terminated if the scholar does not hold a valid student visa. It is the responsibility of international scholars to ensure they hold a valid student visa while in Australia.

RTP Fees Offset

(76) A scholarship will terminate:

- a. on the expiry of the period for which the scholarship was granted;
- b. upon submission of the thesis or creative component for examination;
- c. if the scholar ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in this policy,
- d. if candidature is terminated for any reason;

- e. upon the death or incapacity of the scholar; or
- f. if written resignation or withdrawal from enrolment is received from the scholar by UON Graduate Research.

(77) Once a scholarship is terminated, it cannot be re-activated unless re-enrolment is required.

RTP Stipend with RTP Fees Offset and RTP Allowances

(78) A scholarship will terminate:

- a. on the expiry of the period for which the scholarship was granted;
- b. 14 calendar days after the submission of the thesis or where applicable, creative component for examination;
- c. if the scholar ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in this policy;
- d. if the Committee finds the scholar has failed to observe any condition of the [Rules Governing Higher Degrees by Research](#) or the [Code of Practice for Higher Degree by Research Candidature Policy](#), in which event any monies paid to the scholar subsequent to that breach shall immediately become repayable to the University;
- e. if the Committee finds the scholar has failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress and the candidature is terminated;
- f. upon the death or incapacity of the scholar;
- g. if the scholar sends written resignation or withdrawal from enrolment to UON Graduate Research;
- h. if the scholar does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of Leave of Absence or does not obtain approval to extend that period of Leave of Absence;
- i. when the scholar ceases to be a full-time scholar and when approval has not been obtained to hold the scholarship on a part-time basis; or
- j. if the scholar fails to notify UON Graduate Research whilst in receipt of another benefit greater than 75% of the RTP Stipend.

(79) Once a scholarship is terminated, it cannot be re-activated.

Section 20 - Obligations

(80) The scholar accepts the award of the scholarship subject to the conditions described in this policy, and agrees to abide by the conditions and any subsequent variations.

(81) The scholar is required to conform to the rules and policies of the University governing their program.

Section 21 - Appeal

(82) Applicants and scholars may appeal in writing to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) against decisions made by the Dean of Graduate Research or the Committee on the grounds of procedural deficiency.

(83) Written appeals can be submitted to UON Graduate Research within 20 working days of notification of a decision of the Dean of Graduate Research. The determination by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) is final.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	21st June 2017
Review Date	To Be Advised
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	21st June 2017
Expiry Date	6th March 2018
Responsible Executive	Sherelle Charge Manager Operations - UON Graduate Research
Enquiries Contact	

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Reasonable Adjustment Plan" - A document developed by a student with disability and the University's AccessAbility Team which records reasonable adjustments.

"Candidature" - The period of time between acceptance of offer and termination, withdrawal from, or completion of a higher degree by research program, including periods when a candidate is not enrolled.

"Census date" - The date in each term on which a student / candidate enrolled in a course is deemed to be financially liable for the course.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.