Higher Degree Research Scholarships Procedure

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Next full review
1.0	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Infrastructure)	28 June 2017	28 June 2017	June 2020

Procedure Statement		
Purpose	This Procedure applies to scholarships administered by the University, including Research Training Program scholarships, which provide tuition fee support or fees offsets, a living allowance stipend and/or allowances to higher degree research candidates enrolled at the University.	
Scope	This Procedure applies to scholarships administered by the University that provide tuition fee support or offsets, a living allowance stipend and, where applicable, associated allowances to higher degree research candidates enrolled at the University. The Procedure applies to new and continuing scholarship holders. All continuing scholarship holders at the time of this Procedure coming into force have been notified of changes to conditions.	
Are Local Documents on this subject permitted?	☒ Yes, however Local Documents must not breach mandatory requirements in University-wide Codes of Conduct, Policies, Standards and Procedures.	☐ No
Procedure Processes and Actions		

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1. Introduction

Higher degree research (HDR) scholarships provide financial assistance to recipients while they are enrolled at UNSW for the purpose of conducting research for their higher degree.

HDR scholarships at UNSW are awarded competitively on the basis of academic merit, research experience and research potential. Allocation principles ensure that there is an appropriate distribution across disciplines and across strategic and research priorities of the University. In accordance with the UNSW strategic commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion principles, allocation principles also encompass equity initiatives such as access for indigenous candidates or candidates who have experienced significant disadvantage in their prior access to high quality education. To meet strategic excellence initiatives, candidates undertaking research in a particular area of research priority or those graduating from top 100 universities may be prioritised.

Scholarship funding is provided from a range of sources including the Australian Government, UNSW strategic funding initiatives, philanthropic and corporate donors and other organisations such as national and international scholarship awarding bodies.

Funding from the Australian Government under the Research Training Program (RTP) can be used to support both domestic and international candidates undertaking HDR degrees with no more than 10% of the annual RTP expenditure permitted for international candidates.

Candidates can be offered scholarships to support one or more of the following:

- fees offsets
- stipends for general living costs
- allowances related to the ancillary cost of research degrees.

2. Types of Scholarships

UNSW offers the following prestigious scholarships to candidates of excellent research potential to undertake a higher degree by research at UNSW.

2.1. Within the scope of this Procedure

(a) **Research Training Program Scholarships (RTP) -** Scholarships available for both international and domestic applicants in all disciplines, funded by the Australian Government. This award includes an RTP Stipend, RTP Fees Offset and RTP Allowance.

(b) **RTP Fees Offset without stipend –** a category of RTP Fees Offsets that is available to domestic applicants in all disciplines, funded by the Australian Government. The RTP Fees Offset is a contribution to the tuition fees of an HDR candidate that would otherwise have been paid by the candidate.

(c) **Tuition Fee Scholarship (TFS) including a Research Stipend -** Scholarships available for international applicants only. This award consists of a TFS funded by UNSW and a stipend funded by the Faculty, School or Supervisor.

(d) **University Postgraduate Awards (UPA) -** Scholarships available for domestic applicants in all disciplines. This award consists of an RTP Fees Offset funded by the Australian Government and a UPA Stipend, funded by UNSW.

(e) **University International Postgraduate Award (UIPA) -** Scholarships available for international applicants in all disciplines. This award consists of either an RTP Fees Offset or TFS and a UIPA stipend funded by UNSW.

(f) **Strategic Scholarship Schemes** - Strategic scholarships available for both domestic and international applicants in all disciplines. These structured scholarship initiatives require candidates to complete additional activities as part of their education program. For example, the **Scientia PhD Scholarship Scheme,** requires all candidates to complete career development activities. This award consists of either an RTP Fees Offset or TFS and a stipend.

2.2. Out of scope of this Procedure

(a) **School/Faculty Postgraduate Awards –** Individual academics, Schools or Faculties may also offer scholarships that cover stipends and allowances. Award conditions are outside the scope of this procedure. Applicants should contact the School/Faculty for full details.

(b) **Faculty Top-Up Postgraduate Awards –** Applicants to the scholarships listed as “within scope” above may be considered for various Faculty supplemental scholarships. Such award conditions are outside the scope of this procedure. Applicants should contact the School/Faculty for full details.

(c) **Scholarships supported by external institutions, sponsors and countries –** These include the China Scholarship Council and Pakistan Higher Education Council. All such scholarships are outside the scope of this procedure and are either governed by Memoranda of Understanding with UNSW or directly between the candidate and the external body. If they include a TFS, the terms are identical to those for 2.1(c).

3. Supervision and Facilities Provisions

Prior to an admission offer being made to candidates Schools are required to declare that supervision and resources are available for the applicant should they accept an admission offer. The *Higher Degree Research Supervision Procedure* provides information on the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and HDR candidate. The *Facilities and Resources to Support Higher Degree Research Candidates Guideline* sets out the roles and responsibilities for the provision of facilities and resources for HDR candidates.

4. Eligibility

To be considered for a scholarship at UNSW, applicants must meet all the requirements detailed in the *Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure* at the time of application, including the English language requirements. These include that the applicant must be enrolled in an accredited HDR course of study at UNSW (see further details about enrolment in section 6 below).

4.1. Qualifications

Unless otherwise specified, eligibility for scholarships application requires candidates to hold a four year Bachelor’s degree with Honours class 1 from an Australian institution or equivalent research

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qualification/experience. This qualification must be in a field relevant to the proposed area of research. See the Higher Degree Research Admissions and Pathways Guideline for full details.

4.2. Qualification Equivalence

Equivalence to UNSW Bachelor with Honours or Masters Degree (Research) (MRes) qualifications needs to be demonstrated on the basis of discipline expectations of academic achievement at this level. Section 5 of the *Higher Degree Research Admissions and Pathways Guideline* outlines the procedure for the assessment of the equivalence of academic qualifications.

Where an applicant does not demonstrate Honours 1 equivalence via their formal academic qualifications, their knowledge and skills should be assessed through evaluation of experience and outputs.

4.3. Residency

Applicants must meet relevant residency requirements for the relevant scholarship:

(a) for Domestic Research Scholarships, candidates must either be an Australian citizen, Australian Permanent Resident, or New Zealand citizen.

(b) applicants who have Australian permanent residency pending may be considered for an award only available for domestic applicants, and be awarded a conditional scholarship. Residency must be confirmed by no later than 31 March for Semester 1 commencement, or by 31 August for Semester 2 commencement.

(c) international applicants must meet international student visa requirements as specified by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP), including the requirement to purchase and maintain a standard Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) approved by the Commonwealth Government Department of Health.

4.4. Tuition Fee Scholarships

In the case of tuition fee scholarships, a stipend must be available from either the Faculty/School or Supervisor in order to be offered the TFS. Stipend funds must come from genuine research sources, independent of the candidate or their family. Self-support is not permitted in conjunction with the TFS fee component.

4.5. Part-Time Awards

Part-time study is equivalent to 50% of full time study. Part-time scholarships are only approved in exceptional circumstances where there are demonstrable, significant carer commitments or where medical conditions limit capacity to undertake full-time study.

Part-time scholarships are not available if a candidate is seeking the part-time status to undertake employment.

To apply for part-time scholarships, a statement of reasons must be provided, along with a supporting statement from the proposed supervisor and any other relevant documentation. Candidates must be able to demonstrate the following:

(a) carer responsibilities for a pre-school aged child; or

(b) carer responsibilities for school aged children as a sole parent with limited access to outside support; or

(c) carer responsibilities for an invalid or disabled spouse, child or parent; or

(d) a medical condition which limits the capacity to undertake full-time study.

4.6. Previous Study and other Scholarships

(a) Holders of RTP/UIPA scholarships at UNSW who are granted permanent residency during the tenure of that scholarship will be considered for an equivalent domestic scholarship. Such candidates must inform the Graduate Research School within seven days of obtaining permanent

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residency. In the case of candidates with a TFS scholarship, the School/Faculty will continue to pay the stipend once permanent residency is obtained.

(b) Applicants will NOT be eligible for a scholarship if they:

i. are an international or domestic candidate for a Research Doctorate (or Research Masters applicant converting to Research Doctorate) and have already completed two semesters of full-time equivalent HDR candidature.

ii. are an international or domestic candidate for a Research Masters and have already completed one semesters of full-time equivalent HDR candidature.

iii. hold a research qualification regarded by UNSW to be equivalent to an Australian Research Doctorate degree or, if undertaking a Research Masters degree, hold a research qualification regarded by UNSW to be equivalent to or higher than an Australian Research Masters.

iv. receive a scholarship for which program tuition is a component under any other scholarship scheme to which the Australian Government makes a substantial contribution.

v. receive a primary scholarship stipend or tuition fee scholarship from any source, including UNSW, or under another scholarship scheme to support their candidature in an HDR Program at UNSW.

5. Conditions of Scholarships

Specific conditions, and the value of awards and allowances will be made available via the Graduate Research School website and the scholarship offer letter to successful applicants.

5.1. Tuition Fees and Fees Offsets

An RTP Fees Offset is a contribution to the cost of tuition fees as an HDR candidate of the University for the standard duration of their program. The tuition fees offset is provided through the support of the Australian Government and the value of the contribution to the RTP tuition fees offset is detailed in the offer letter to the candidate. Additional tuition costs beyond the contribution provided by the Australian Government are provided by UNSW.

- The maximum duration of the RTP Fees Offset is up to two years Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) for candidates undertaking a Master by research degree, or up to four years FTE for candidates undertaking a Doctoral degree.
- For the TFS, the tuition fee component is funded by UNSW and is for a maximum duration of three and a half years FTE.

5.2. Stipends

Stipends are paid into the recipient's nominated Australian bank account fortnightly.

For RTP and UPA, UIPA and TFS, scholarships, the stipends are available for the following maximum periods:

- three and a half years FTE for a Research Doctorate degree
- two years FTE for a Research Masters degree

For scholarships supporting structured PhD programs such as the UNSW Scientia PhD Scholarship scheme, and international joint agreements under the China Scholarship Council, Pakistan Higher Education Commission, and Conicyt the maximum stipend duration is four years FTE.

The duration of the stipend will be affected by a transfer between Masters and PhD. When a candidate transfers, the maximum duration will be adjusted to align with the program to which they are transferring.

Stipend rates:

- For RTP, UPA, UIPA and TFS, the stipend rate will be at the base full-time RTP stipend rate for the current year and will be published on the UNSW website. The stipend will be indexed annually taking effect from 1 January of the relevant year.

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- For the Scientia PhD Scholarship Scheme, the stipend rate is $40,000 per annum. Indexing will be at the discretion of UNSW

5.3. Allowances

All recipients may be entitled to:

(a) **Relocation allowance –** a contribution to the costs associated with relocating themselves, their spouse and dependents to UNSW. UNSW may pay a relocation allowance to candidates who:

   i. were living overseas or interstate at the time of applying for the scholarship; or

   ii. have not studied at an institution in NSW/ACT within 12 months prior to applying for the scholarship and had to relocate to Sydney or Canberra to commence their program at UNSW

(b) **Thesis allowance –** a contribution to the costs associated with the production of a Research Masters or Doctorate thesis.

Allowances for international candidates may also include:

(a) A contribution towards the cost of Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for the candidate and their dependents for the standard award duration. Note that OSHC coverage is fixed at acceptance. Upgrades from single coverage to dual family or multi family will not be available.

(b) RTP and Scientia only: Waiver of Visa Charges (by DIBP at the time of Visa application).

Recipients of a UNSW Scientia PhD Scholarship are awarded a travel and development support package of up to $10,000 per annum.

5.4. Work and other income

It is UNSW's expectation that full-time HDR candidates will spend a minimum of 35 hours per week on their research candidature. While candidates may choose to undertake employment opportunities during their candidature, it must not interfere with their research or their ability to undertake full-time study and cannot be accepted as grounds for an extension of the scholarship.

With the exception of work that is specified as a program requirement, an award holder with a student visa or some other visa type may undertake work unrelated to their program requirements consistent with the conditions of their visa.

To be eligible for a RTP Stipend a candidate must not be receiving income from another source to support their general living costs while undertaking their program if that income is greater than 75 per cent of the RTP Stipend rate. Income unrelated to the candidate's program or income received for their program but not for the purposes of supporting general living costs will not be taken into account.

5.5. Leave Entitlements

Paid leave entitlements are only applicable for scholarship holders while they are enrolled. Unpaid entitlements are available for all candidates. See Appendix A for more details of leave types and entitlements.

5.6. Acknowledgement of scholarship

It is expected that scholarship holders will acknowledge the contribution of the scholarship provider when publishing material that relates to the research project by the recipient.

(a) RTP Scholarships

The RTP holder must acknowledge the Australian Commonwealth Government's contribution in relation to the RTP scholarship. This acknowledgment must occur at all times during or after the completion of the HDR program when the recipient of a RTP scholarship, his/her supervisor, or any other party, publishes or produces material such as books, articles, newsletters or other literary or artistic works which relate to the research project carried out by the recipient of the RTP scholarship. Acknowledgment must include the mention of the student's support through an "Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship".

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6. Enrolment

(a) Candidates must be enrolled/enrolling on campus in a full-time HDR program at UNSW for the appropriate semester and be undertaking study in a subject area supported by UNSW as evidenced by School and Faculty support in order to receive scholarships stipends, unless prior approval has been given under section 4.5.

(b) Domestic candidates enrolled in either a full-time or part-time capacity are eligible to receive RTP Fees Offset support.

(c) Candidates are expected to undertake their research at a UNSW-affiliated location such as a UNSW campus, teaching hospital, or other research facility of the University as listed on the Research website.

(d) The *Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure* details the requirements for approval, if from the start of candidature the nature of the research requires the candidate to spend time away from the University.

(e) Scholarships will not normally be awarded to candidates who are externally enrolled for personal reasons.

(f) If a scholarship recipient subsequently wishes to change to external enrolment for personal reasons, they may be required to relinquish their scholarship.

(g) An applicant who wishes to be enrolled remotely and based outside Australia is not eligible for a scholarship from UNSW.

7. Suspension of Award

Candidates may apply to UNSW for a suspension or an accumulated period of leave of their studies. The approval of leave will be at the discretion of UNSW and in accordance with the *Variation of Candidature Procedure*. Scholarship payments will be suspended in such circumstances. Periods of suspension will not be deducted from a candidate's entitlement under the RTP.

8. Termination of Entitlements

A candidate's entitlements are terminated if a candidate:

(a) has their candidature suspended, discontinued or terminated;

(b) withdraws from the program;

(c) ceases to be enrolled and has not requested a period of leave;

(d) submits a thesis and has completed all other requirements for the program

(e) exhausts the maximum period of entitlement;

(f) does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of leave or does not make arrangements to extend that period of leave;

(g) ceases to be enrolled full-time in the HDR program and has not obtained approval to hold the scholarship while enrolled part-time;

(h) deliberately provides incorrect, inaccurate, fraudulent or misleading information in order to gain or retain a scholarship; or

(i) if UNSW determines that the student has otherwise not complied with a requirement specified in this procedure.

9. Changing Programs

Where an RTP candidate changes program to another HDR degree at the same level, the period of RTP scholarship entitlement remains unchanged. For example, if an RTP candidate has completed one year of a Research Masters and then changes to a different Research Masters, the candidate will only be entitled to one further year full-time equivalent study.

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10. Transferring

10.1. Transferring from another Higher Education Provider

Candidates may transfer from another participating Higher Education Provider and be eligible for RTP scholarships, provided UNSW has sufficient RTP Fees Offset funds available and the other eligibility criteria set out in this procedure are satisfied. For the purposes of the RTP, a transfer occurs where:

(a) a candidate who is enrolled in an HDR program and, without completing the requirements of that program, commences a different HDR program at the same level; and

(b) there is no interval between the two enrolments unless the interval is covered by an approved period of leave; and

(c) the research undertaken by the candidate is continued or modified to meet the requirements of the new program.

(d) Where a transfer occurs, UNSW will obtain details regarding the candidate's enrolment and consumption of RTP entitlement while enrolled with the previous Higher Education Provider so that the candidate's remaining entitlement can be determined.

10.2. From a Research Masters Degree to a Research Doctorate Degree

Where an RTP candidate commences studies in a Research Masters degree and then transfers to a Research Doctorate, the candidate is entitled to a maximum of four years full-time equivalent study under the RTP Fees Offset, including the time enrolled in the Research Masters degree.

A transfer occurs where:

(a) a candidate enrolled in a Research Masters is undertaking research at such a standard that UNSW recommends that the candidate transfer their degree to a Research Doctorate or the candidate seeks to transfer to a Research Doctorate and this is supported by UNSW; and

(b) there is no break between the candidature for the Research Masters degree and the Research Doctorate degree unless the interval is covered by an approved period of leave; and

(c) the research undertaken by the candidate while enrolled for the Research Masters is continued for the Research Doctorate or modified to meet the requirements for the Research Doctorate.

10.3. From a Research Doctorate Degree to a Research Masters Degree

Where an RTP candidate elects or is required, for academic or personal reasons, to transfer his or her candidature from a Research Doctorate to a Research Masters, the candidate is limited to RTP Fees Offset for a maximum period of two years full-time equivalent study including the time enrolled in the Research Doctorate degree.

11. Prior Studies

If a candidate withdraws from an HDR program at UNSW or other Higher Education Provider and then wishes to return (after any period of time) to the project they were originally doing, they may apply for a new scholarship but the duration of the scholarship will be reduced by any:

(a) previous enrolment in the program of study prior to taking up the award

(b) credit received for previous study towards the current degree

If an entirely new research project is initiated upon their return, the candidate would be eligible to apply for a new scholarship.

12. Grievance and Review Procedures for HDR candidates

Grievances and complaints are managed according to the *Student Complaint Procedure*.

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13. Arrangements for Enrichment Activities as Part of an HDR Program

If opportunities for optional industry placements, research internships, professional practice activities or other similar enrichment activities undertaken as part of an HDR program are available, the Dean of Graduate Research should be consulted regarding the impact on the scholarship duration and stipend rates.

14. Provision of False and Misleading Information

If UNSW knows or has reason to believe that a candidate in receipt of a scholarship has deliberately provided false or misleading information to UNSW in relation to that scholarship, UNSW will immediately re-assess the candidate's entitlement to the scholarship.

15. Scholarship Administration

The UNSW Graduate Research School is responsible for administering all scholarships that provide tuition fee support, a living allowance stipend and/or a top up scholarship to HDR candidates in cases where the candidate has been awarded the scholarship by UNSW or an external scholarship provider who has assigned the financial management of the scholarship to UNSW.

16. Definitions of Terms Used

Unless the contrary intention appears, the terms used within the Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2017 have the same meaning as in the Act.

Accountabilities	
Responsible Officer	Dean of Graduate Research
Contact Officer	Director, Graduate Research School
Supporting Information	
Legislative Compliance	This procedure supports the University's compliance with the following legislation: *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cth) *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000* (Cth) *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW) *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) Disability Standards for Education (2005) Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2017
Parent Document (Policy)	Higher Degree Research Scholarships Policy
Supporting Documents	Nil
Related Documents	Conditions for Award of Doctor of Philosophy Policy Conditions for Award of Master of Philosophy Policy Admissions Policy Admissions to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure Thesis Examination Procedures Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy Higher Degree Research Supervision Procedure Variation of Candidature Procedure

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Superseded Documents	Nil
File Number	2017/15228
Definitions and Acronyms	
Course of study	An accredited HDR program leading to a Research Doctorate or a Research Masters.
The department	The Commonwealth Department of Education and Training
Domestic candidate	Australian Citizens, Permanent Residents and New Zealand Citizens
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HDR	A higher degree by research which is a Research Doctorate or Research Masters (Masters by Research or Master of Philosophy (MPhil),) program for which at least two-thirds of the student load for the program is required as research work
International student	As defined as an "overseas student" in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*
Research Doctorate	A Level 10 Doctoral Degree (Research) qualification as described in the AQF
Research Masters	A Level 9 Masters Degree (Research) qualification as described in the AQF
RTP	The Research Training Program
RTP Allowance	A type of RTP Scholarship to assist with ancillary costs incurred by an HDR candidate in undertaking an HDR course of study
RTP Fees Offset	A type of RTP Scholarship to assist with tuition fee payment that would otherwise be payable by an HDR candidate
RTP Scholarship	A form of support awarded to a candidate funded by the Australian Government
RTP Stipend	A type of RTP Scholarship to assist candidates with general living costs
Standard duration	The standard duration for a Masters scholarship holder is two years and for a Research Doctorate scholarship holder it is three and a half years.
Leave	A period of time during which a scholarship holder is not receiving RTP or UNSW Scholarship support, which has been approved in accordance with UNSW Policy

Revision History

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
1.0	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Infrastructure)	28 June 2017	28 June 2017	This is a new Procedure

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Appendix A – Scholarship leave types and entitlements

Leave type	Time required to be completed for eligibility	Application required?	Duration	Supporting documentation required	Scholarship and thesis submission date extended?
Paid Annual Leave	N/A	No. This is managed directly with supervisor.	Max. of 20 working days per year. Days may be accrued over the life of the award but will be forfeited when the scholarship is terminated.	No	No
Unpaid leave in semester blocks*	N/A	Yes – see Variation to Candidature.	6-12 months	Yes – please see Variation to Candidature.	Yes
Unpaid leave not in semester blocks*	N/A	Yes – email request to Candidature Management Officer.	Variable	No	No. The Scholarship tenure will be reduced by this time.
Paid Sick Leave/Carer's leave <10 days	N/A	No. This is managed directly with supervisor.	Max. of 10 working days per year. Days may be accrued over the life of the award but will be forfeited when the scholarship is terminated.	No	No
Paid Sick Leave/Carer's leave >10 working days	After completion of 12 months FTE of the award.	Yes – email request to Candidature Management Officer.	60 working days total over the duration of the award.	Yes - medical certificate or primary carer's certificate, and any other supporting documentation.	Yes
Paid Parental Leave	After completion of 12 months FTE of the award.	Yes - email request to Candidature Management Officer if remaining enrolled, or Variation to Candidature if taking leave.	60 working days combined total over the duration of the award . Can apply for further unpaid leave – see above.	Yes - medical certificate, and any other supporting documentation.	Yes. Scholarship extended in all cases, candidature only extended if candidate takes program leave.

Note - Please check visa requirements before applying.