

# Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Scholarships (Including RTP-Funded Scholarships) Procedure

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This procedure supports the [Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Policy](#) by stating requirements of the University of Canberra (the University) for:

- a. allocation and management of Australian Government [Research Training Program \(RTP\)](#)-funded scholarships and
- b. establishment, allocation and management of other HDR scholarships.

(2) The University's management of RTP-funded scholarships, and the conditions of award of those scholarships, will be consistent with the requirements of the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#).

(3) The [Higher Degree by Research \(HDR\) Procedure](#) states requirements in relation to all other aspects of HDR candidature.

## Section 2 - Scope

(4) This procedure has the same scope as the [HDR Policy](#). The types of scholarships to which it applies are:

- a. scholarships funded by the RTP;
- b. scholarships funded by the University or a faculty of the University; or
- c. scholarships managed by the University that are funded or co-funded by an organisation or person external to the University.

## Section 3 - Policy

(5) This Procedure supports the [HDR Policy](#).

## Section 4 - Procedure

(6) An HDR scholarship may provide one or more of the following types of financial support to a candidate:

- a. a stipend (living allowance) for a given period of candidature;
- b. an additional living allowance (a top-up scholarship) to supplement a stipend scholarship;
- c. payment of the candidate's tuition fees, either in the form of an RTP fees offset or (for candidates who are international students only) a fee sponsorship; and
- d. allowances to assist with ancillary costs of a higher degree by research.

## Conditions of award

(7) Each scholarship, including the co-funded ones, will state the conditions on which it will be awarded (the conditions of award). For the conditions of award of RTP scholarships, see the documents published on the [University website](#):

- a. RTP fees offset scholarship; and
- b. RTP stipend scholarship.

(8) The conditions of award of a proposed new scholarship will be submitted for approval to the Dean, Graduate Research School, by the Executive Dean of the proposing faculty or head of the proposing research institute, centre or business unit.

(9) The conditions of award for a scholarship will state:

- a. the criteria for allocation of the scholarship (both eligibility criteria and criteria for allocation);
- b. how to apply for the scholarship and how the scholarship will be awarded;
- c. the amount(s) of funding the scholarship will provide;
- d. where the scholarship provides a stipend, its rate and duration, whether and on what conditions it can be extended, and to what paid leave a scholarship recipient is entitled to;
- e. whether the scholarship recipient's entitlements under the scholarship will be affected by changes to candidature such as changing from full-time to part-time enrolment, changing their research topic, transferring to a different course or enrolling concurrently in another course, going on placement or taking up a research opportunity outside the university, or undertaking employment;
- f. any differences in entitlements under the scholarship for a candidate who has transferred to the University from an HDR course at another institution;
- g. under what circumstances the scholarship may be terminated; and
- h. how a scholarship recipient may raise a grievance about the allocation or management of the scholarship.

## Proposing a scholarship

(10) Proposal of a new scholarship should only be done after funding for the scholarship has been confirmed with the funder.

(11) A faculty, division, research centre or institute, or an external person or organisation may propose the establishment of a new faculty-specific scholarship.

(12) Where a faculty, division, research centre or institute proposes a faculty-specific scholarship:

- a. the Graduate Research School will, in consultation with the faculty, division, research centre or institute, draft the conditions of award; and
- b. the Executive Dean or head of the faculty, division, research centre or institute must recommend the conditions of award to the Dean, Graduate Research School for approval, and confirm that:
  - i. if the scholarship will be funded by an industry partner, Research Services have been consulted and support the proposal to establish it; or
  - ii. if the scholarship will be funded by an external donor who is not an industry partner, Advancement has been consulted and supports the proposal to establish it.

(13) Wherever possible, leave entitlements of all stipend scholarships should be consistent with the leave entitlements of RTP-funded stipend scholarships.

(14) The Dean, Graduate Research School may approve a scholarship with more restricted leave entitlements where

they are satisfied that this is a condition of external funding of the scholarship which cannot be changed.

(15) In considering whether to approve the establishment of a scholarship, the Dean, Graduate Research School will consider whether:

- a. the donor is acceptable to the University;
- b. the conditions of award are full, complete, clear and fair to candidates; and
- c. establishing the scholarship would not expose the University to financial risk or another type of risk.

## **Changing or cancelling a scholarship**

(16) If the Dean, Graduate Research School considers that the title, value or conditions of award of a scholarship is no longer suitable, they or a Graduate Research School staff member may consult the person and/or donor who proposed the scholarship to discuss changing the scholarship.

(17) If the concerns of the Dean, Graduate Research School cannot be met as an outcome of this discussion, the Dean may cancel the scholarship.

## **Eligibility for scholarships**

(18) To be considered for a scholarship, a scholarship applicant must meet the eligibility criteria stated in the conditions of award of that scholarship and be either:

- a. an applicant for admission to an HDR course of the University, who has submitted a complete application for admission, including all required supporting documents, and is eligible to be offered a place in the course; or
- b. already enrolled in such a course.

(19) Where an applicant for admission to an HDR course is made a conditional offer of admission, on condition that they provide results that are not yet available, they may also be considered for a conditional offer of an HDR scholarship (for which they meet the eligibility criteria), on the same condition.

## **Applying for a scholarship**

(20) To be considered for an HDR scholarship, a person must apply for it by the process required by the Dean, Graduate Research School.

- a. Domestic applicants do not need to apply for an RTP fees offset scholarship. If they are admitted to an HDR course, they will be awarded this scholarship.
- b. All applicants do not need to apply for an RTP Allowance. All students admitted to a HDR course will be awarded this scholarship.
- c. Where an enrolled candidate applies for a stipend scholarship, the candidate's primary supervisor must provide a reference directly to the Graduate Research School.
- d. When applying for a HDR scholarship, applicants must disclose if they are in receipt of any other stipend scholarships.

(21) Scholarship applications and their outcomes will be kept in confidence by staff who manage and assess them, other than that the Graduate Research School may publish the names of candidates who are awarded a scholarship.

(22) The Graduate Research School staff assess scholarship applications and, if they are complete and demonstrate that the scholarship applicant meets the eligibility criteria, forward them for assessment by the relevant Faculty.

(23) An HDR candidate who has applied for a scholarship but was not awarded it may apply for the same scholarship

again in a later scholarships award round, by the same application process. See also the section on 'Grievance and appeals'.

## **Awarding scholarships**

(24) Each domestic HDR candidate will be awarded an RTP fees offset scholarship, on admission to their HDR course.

(25) International HDR candidates who are awarded an RTP Stipend Scholarship through a competitive process may also be offered an RTP Fee Offset Scholarship.

(26) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor will each year decide which categories of candidates will have priority for allocation of RTP stipend scholarships, and these groups will be published on the University's website.

(27) A scholarship will not be awarded in a given year if there is no applicant of sufficient merit.

(28) For each calendar year, the Graduate Research School manages a single main award process for RTP stipend scholarships and other stipend scholarships that are open to candidates university wide.

(29) The Dean, Graduate Research School may decide to offer a second, mid-year scholarship award process.

(30) Faculties assess scholarship applications from:

- a. applicants for admission to HDR courses who are seeking to have their candidature hosted by the faculty; and
- b. current HDR candidates whose candidature the faculty hosts.

(31) The faculty will use the scholarship applicant ranking form provided by the Dean, Graduate Research School to rank, in order of merit, its applicants for RTP stipend scholarships and any other stipend scholarships that are open to candidates university wide.

(32) The scholarship ranking form requires the faculty to consider, in ranking each applicant, their qualifications, research experience and research outputs, and their research proposal and its alignment with the University's strategic priorities.

(33) The faculty will provide to the Graduate Research School, by the deadline specified, its ranked lists of applicants and the completed scholarship ranking form for each applicant.

(34) The Dean, Graduate Research School will convene the University Research Scholarship Ranking Committee (URSRC), which will:

- a. review the faculties' ranked lists of scholarship applicants and the basis of the faculties' ranking decisions; and
- b. for each type of scholarship or individual scholarship, develop a proposed single ranking list in order of merit. This list will be kept in confidence and will not be shared with others outside the membership of the scholarships ranking panel.

(35) The membership of the HDR scholarships ranking panel will be:

- a. the Dean, Graduate Research School (chair);
- b. one HDR Officer from each faculty; and
- c. the Manager, HDR Services, Graduate Research School and one or more members of the HDR Services team.

(36) The panel will recommend the ranking list it has developed to the Dean, Graduate Research School as the basis for offering scholarships to applicants.

(37) Where an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander candidate has the same ranking for award of a scholarship as another candidate, the scholarship will be awarded to the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander candidate.

(38) The award of each faculty-specific scholarship is decided by the Dean, Graduate Research School on the recommendation of the Executive Dean of the faculty.

### **Offering and accepting scholarships**

(39) Once the Dean, Graduate Research School has approved the scholarship ranking lists, the Graduate Research School will offer the available scholarships to the applicants ranked highest on the relevant lists.

(40) The receive a scholarship, a candidate who is offered a scholarship must:

- a. be able to start their enrolment in their HDR course in the year in which the scholarship is offered unless they have approval from the Dean, Graduate Research School;
- b. accept the conditions of award of that scholarship;
- c. complete the offer acceptance process by the offer acceptance deadline; and
- d. if the offer of the scholarship is conditional, meet any conditions by the offer acceptance deadline.

(41) If a candidate does not accept their offer and, if the offer is conditional, meet any conditions, by the offer acceptance deadline, they will be considered to have declined the offer, and the scholarship will be offered to the next ranked applicant who has not yet been offered the scholarship.

(42) An applicant who has been offered admission to an HDR course, and a stipend scholarship, may apply to the Dean, Graduate Research School for permission to defer their start of candidature and the start of the stipend until later in the year for in which the scholarship is offered to begin.

### **Effect of transfer from another institution on RTP scholarships**

(43) A person who transfers their HDR candidature from another educational institution to the University of Canberra may, when applying for admission, apply to transfer their RTP stipend scholarship. To be eligible to be considered for a continued RTP stipend scholarship as a candidate at the University of Canberra, the person:

- a. must have been offered, and take up, a place in an HDR course at the University of Canberra; and
- b. must meet both:
  - i. the criteria for award of an RTP stipend scholarship stated in the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#); and
  - ii. the conditions for award of the scholarship stated in the University of Canberra conditions of award.

(44) Where a candidate transferring their HDR candidature from another tertiary institution applies for a continued RTP stipend scholarship, and meets the criteria stated in the previous clause and its subclauses, the Dean, Graduate Research School may allocate an RTP stipend scholarship to them if:

- a. the Dean considers that, had the candidate been ranked in the most recent scholarship allocation round, they would have been ranked to receive a stipend scholarship; and
- b. the University has RTP funding available to pay the stipend.

(45) Where a recipient of an RTP-funded scholarship began their HDR candidature at another tertiary education institution and has transferred their candidature to the University of Canberra, the period for which they will receive an RTP stipend scholarship and/or RTP fee offset scholarship will be reduced by the period during which they received these scholarships at the other institution.

## Support and supervision of scholarship recipients

(46) The [HDR Procedure](#) states the University's requirements:

- a. to ensure that HDR candidates are well supported and supervised to succeed in their candidature; and
- b. for candidates' progress in their course, monitoring of their progress, and actions where a candidate's progress is found to be unsatisfactory.

## Continued eligibility for scholarships

(47) Where a scholarship's conditions of award include requirements in relation to the candidate's progress in their candidature, the annual progress report process will identify whether the candidate continues to meet these requirements.

## Effects of leave and intermission on RTP stipend scholarships

(48) The provisions of this section apply to RTP stipend scholarships. For the leave entitlements of other stipend scholarships, see the conditions of award of those scholarships.

(49) The [HDR Procedure](#) states candidates' entitlements to leave from candidature. This section explains which types of leave result in an increase in the duration of a candidate's RTP stipend payments. All other types of leave do not.

(50) Candidates' stipend scholarship payments continue during the standard leave entitlements, per full-time equivalent year of candidature, of:

- a. up to 14 candidature days personal leave; and
- b. 20 candidature days recreation leave.

(51) The duration of a candidate's stipend payments will be increased by the following types of leave, if the Dean, Graduate Research School has approved the leave:

- a. any period of personal leave longer than 14 consecutive candidature days up to:
  - i. their entitlement of 14 candidature days of sick leave with stipend paid per year of the scholarship; and
  - ii. any sick leave accrued from a previous year;
- b. up to 85 candidature days of parental leave (primary carer) during the duration of the scholarship, if:
  - i. the candidate has given birth to a child or is the primary carer of a newly adopted child; and
  - ii. the leave is taken after the candidate has completed one full-time year of candidature or part-time equivalent;
- c. up to 14 candidature days of parental leave (secondary carer) during the duration of the scholarship if the candidate:
  - i. is the partner of someone who has given birth to a child and is that child's primary carer, or is the primary carer of a newly adopted child; and
- d. the leave is taken after the candidate has completed one full-time year of candidature or part-time equivalent.

(52) Payment of a stipend scholarship may be suspended for any leave beyond the period of leave allowance specified in the scholarship CoA, provided that the Dean, Graduate Research School has approved the candidate's request to take the leave.

(53) Where the Dean, Graduate Research School allows a recipient of a stipend scholarship to go on intermission:

- a. the payment of the stipend will be suspended for the period of intermission; and

- b. the duration of the scholarship will be extended by the period of intermission.

## Grievances and appeals

(54) An applicant for an HDR scholarship who is dissatisfied with the decision not to award them the scholarship can raise a grievance in relation to the decision, or appeal against it, in accordance with the [Student Grievance Resolution Policy](#).

(55) The University considers the decision of the HDR scholarships ranking panel to be an academic decision, and so the grounds for appeal against such a decision are restricted as specified in the [Student Grievance Resolution Policy](#).

(56) A recipient of an HDR scholarship who is dissatisfied with an aspect of the management of the scholarship or a decision in relation to it, can raise a grievance about this or appeal against the decision, in accordance with the [Student Grievance Resolution Policy](#).

## Section 5 - Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Alternate	Of a panel member, someone who may attend in place of a member when that member is unable to attend.
Calendar Days	Every day of the year.
Calendar Days FTE	Calendar days full time equivalent. For part-time (50%) candidates, one calendar day FTE is 2 calendar days.
Candidature Days	Cays that count towards a candidates maximum duration of candidature. For part time (50 per cent) HDR candidates, one candidature day equals 2 calendar days.
Conditions of Award	Conditions on which scholarships, including co-funded scholarships, are awarded.
Coursework	Of a unit, that the unit requires the student to undertake specific learning activities and assessment tasks, rather than being the record of enrolment for a candidate's research project.
Faculty-Specific Scholarship	A scholarship for which eligibility is limited to candidates enrolled in a faculty, research institute in a faculty, or discipline within a faculty.
Part-Time Equivalent	In relation to a period of full-time enrolment, the longer period that a candidate enrolled part-time would take to complete the same amount of study and research. For example, for a candidate enrolled half-time, their equivalent of one year of full-time enrolment would be 2 years.
<a href="#">Research Training Program (RTP)</a>	The program of the Commonwealth Government that funds HDR tuition, supervision and candidature.
Stipend	A living allowance.
Top-Up Scholarship	An additional living allowance to supplement a stipend scholarship.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Future
<b>Effective Date</b>	30th April 2025
<b>Review Date</b>	30th April 2030
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
<b>Approval Date</b>	13th November 2024
<b>Expiry Date</b>	To Be Advised
<b>Custodian</b>	Michelle Lincoln Deputy Vice-Chancellor
<b>Responsible Manager</b>	Wayne Spratford Dean, Graduate Research School
<b>Author</b>	Nick Markesinis Policy Specialist
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Nick Markesinis Policy Specialist <hr/> Policy