



Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date
2.1	Vice-Chancellor and President	12 December 2023	12 December 2023
Procedure Statement			
Purpose	This Procedure outlines the terms, conditions and processes associated with awarding Higher Degree by Research scholarships at UNSW, including Australian Government Research Training Program scholarships.		
Scope	This document applies to all Higher Degree Research scholarships administered by UNSW that provide tuition fee support, a living allowance stipend, and associated allowances to HDR scholarship holders at the University.		
Are Local Documents on this subject permitted?	☒ Yes, however Local Documents must be consistent with this University-wide document		☐ No
Procedure Processes and Actions			

1. Introduction

Higher Degree Research Scholarships (HDR) at UNSW are used to support research excellence, research capacity, and equity and diversity goals of the University. This procedure applies to the following HDR scholarships at UNSW:

- Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) scholarships (including RTP stipends, RTP Fees Offsets and RTP Allowances)
- University Postgraduate Awards (UPA)
- University International Postgraduate Award (UIPA)
- Tuition Fee Scholarship (TFS) including a living allowance stipend
- Strategic Scholarship schemes, including the Scientia PhD Scholarship Scheme and Industry-engaged scholarships
- School/Faculty merit based Scholarships (includes Research Centres and Institutes)

The following scholarships are not in scope in this procedure:

- School/Faculty Top-Up Scholarships
- Scholarships provided by external institutions, donors, sponsors and countries

2. Scholarship administration

The Graduate Research School (GRS) is responsible for administering all HDR scholarships at UNSW. This can include HDR scholarships awarded by an external scholarship provider who has assigned the financial management of the scholarship to UNSW.

3. Application process

3.1. Prospective candidates

- a) Scholarship application rounds for domestic and international applicants will be advertised on the UNSW website.
- b) Prospective candidates must apply for a scholarship before the advertised deadline. Only complete applications can be considered. Applications which are incomplete will be put into the next round once all outstanding documentation and information has been received.
- c) Prospective candidates can apply for a scholarship at the same time as applying for a Higher Degree Research program on the University's online system.

3.2. Currently enrolled candidates

- a) Currently enrolled Doctoral or Masters candidates can apply for scholarships if they have completed no more than five terms of full-time equivalent study.
- b) Current candidates can submit applications direct to the GRS as detailed on the website.

3.3. Merit based process

- a) Scholarships are allocated in accordance with the objectives of the RTP and the research excellence, research capacity, and equity and diversity goals of UNSW.
- b) Scholarships are awarded using a merit based, competitive process and in accordance with these objectives.
- c) Priority will be given to applicants who have not already been awarded a research degree at the level for which they are applying.

3.4. Faculty or School scholarships

- a) Faculties and/or Schools are responsible for the application, selection, and outcome process of scholarships restricted to applicants from their Faculty/School.
- b) Faculties will notify the GRS of the nominated applicant and the GRS will arrange payment for the scholarship.

3.5. Outcomes

- a) All scholarship applicants will be notified of the outcome in writing by the GRS.
- b) All scholarship holders will be provided with a scholarship letter of offer which includes the terms and conditions for the particular scholarship awarded.

3.6. Deferrals

- a) Candidates may defer the commencement of their scholarship. Details about conditions for deferrals will be outlined in the scholarship letter of offer.

3.7. Part-time awards

- a) Applications for part-time living allowance stipends must be made in writing to the Director, Graduate Research School. International candidates can only receive a part-time award if permitted under the conditions of their visa. Part-time scholarships will only be approved if the candidate can demonstrate the following:
 - i. Significant family caring responsibilities which prevent the candidate from undertaking a full-time study load.
 - ii. A disability or ongoing medical condition which prevents the candidate from undertaking a full-time study load.

4. Supervision and resources

- a) Before an offer of scholarship can be made, the School is required to declare that supervision and resources are available for the applicant's research project. The admission application (where applicable) must be approved and finalised.
- b) The resources available for HDR candidates are outlined in the [Facilities and Resources to Support Higher Degree Research Candidates Guideline](#). The roles and responsibilities of HDR supervisors and candidates are outlined in the [Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy](#) and [Higher Degree Research Supervision Procedure](#).

5. Eligibility

- a) A candidate must either be a domestic or overseas student as defined in the *Higher Education Support Act*.
- b) Candidates must have met the entry requirements for a Higher Degree Research program for which they are enrolled at UNSW as specified in the [Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure](#).

- c) Candidates must be enrolled at a UNSW approved location and meet the minimum residency requirement of two-thirds of their degree at the University or at a UNSW affiliated institution during their candidature. Candidates must have access to the support, infrastructure and experience to successfully complete their HDR program, and be actively engaged with the UNSW research community.

5.1. Living allowance stipend eligibility

Candidates must be enrolled in a HDR program on a full-time basis unless approval has been granted for a part-time award in accordance with Section 3.7 of this procedure.

5.2. RTP fees offset eligibility

- a) Domestic candidates whose proposed candidature meets the objectives of the Research Training Program scheme will be awarded an RTP Tuition Fees Offset either at a part-time or full-time basis.
- b) International candidates who receive an RTP living allowance stipend will also be awarded an RTP fees offset.
- c) Candidates must not be receiving an equivalent award or scholarship from the Commonwealth government intended to offset tuition fees.

5.3. Ongoing eligibility

In order to maintain scholarship eligibility:

- a) Candidates are expected to spend 35-40 hours per week on their research for a total of 48 weeks per year. Approved part-time candidates are expected to spend 15-20 hours per week on their research for a total of 48 weeks per year.
- b) Candidates must not be receiving income (such as another scholarship) to support their enrolment if that income is greater than 75% of the primary scholarship rate (see Section 9).
- c) Permission to 'work away' for research purposes may be granted to currently enrolled scholarship holders in accordance with the requirements outlined in the [Variation to Candidature Procedure](#). Candidates found to be 'working away' without obtaining permission may have their scholarship (including any tuition fee offsets) suspended for the period they are away from campus. This period of suspension will be deducted from the total duration of the award.

6. Benefits

Specific benefits for each HDR Scholarship vary and will be outlined in the scholarship letter of offer. Benefits may include one or more of the following:

6.1. Living allowance stipend

- a) A living allowance stipend provides financial support to a candidate to assist with their general living costs while undertaking an HDR program.
- b) The minimum stipend rate at UNSW is set by the Dean of Graduate Research. The rate will be published on the GRS website. The rate will be \$37,684 in 2024 and will be indexed annually.
- c) Scholarships at the maximum RTP rate may be offered when it aligns to the university's strategy. These will be advertised on the HDR Recruitment website as and when they are available.
- d) Living allowance stipends are paid on a fortnightly basis into a nominated Australian bank account opened in the candidate's name.
- e) Living allowance stipends paid at the full time rate are not considered taxable income.
- f) Living allowance stipends for approved part-time candidates (see Section 3.7) are awarded at 50% of the full-time scholarship rate. Part-time scholarships are considered taxable income by the Australian Taxation Office.

6.2. Tuition fees offset

- a) An RTP tuition fees offset scholarship pays for the full cost of the HDR candidate's tuition fees for the scholarship duration as outlined in Section 7.

- b) Candidates who remain enrolled over the maximum duration of the scholarship may become liable for any remaining tuition fees.

6.3. Overseas Student Health Cover allowance (OSHC)

- a) A scholarship for an international candidate may include an allowance for OSHC at the single rate of UNSW's preferred provider for the duration of the HDR program. This rate will be advertised on the UNSW website.
- b) The OSHC allowance must be claimed at the commencement of the scholarship.

6.4. Relocation allowance

- a) A scholarship holder may claim a relocation allowance upon commencement of their HDR program.
- b) Candidates must have been located overseas or interstate at the time of the scholarship application and must not have studied at an institution in NSW or ACT within 12 months prior to applying for the scholarship.
- c) The rate will be published on the GRS website. International scholarship holders may claim \$2000 in 2024. Domestic scholarship holders may claim \$1000 in 2024.

6.5. Thesis allowance

A scholarship holder may claim thesis printing and academic publication cost allowance to contribute to the costs of producing a thesis. The rate will be published on the GRS website. The thesis allowance is \$400 in 2024 and may be claimed following thesis submission.

7. Duration of award

Unless otherwise specified in the scholarship letter of offer, the following standard duration of each award applies:

7.1. RTP Tuition Fee Offsets

The maximum duration of an RTP Tuition Fees offset is:

- a) 2 years full time equivalent for Research Masters candidates.
- b) 4 years full time equivalent for Domestic Research Doctorate candidates.
- c) 3.5 years full time equivalent for International Research Doctorate candidates.
- d) 2 years full time equivalent for International Research Masters candidates.

7.2. Living allowance stipends

The maximum duration of a living allowance stipend is:

- a) 2 years full time equivalent for Research Masters candidates.
- b) 3.5 years full time equivalent for Research Doctorate candidates.

7.3. Tuition Fee Scholarships

The maximum duration of a Tuition Fee Scholarship (including living allowance stipend) is typically:

- a) 2 years full time equivalent for Research Masters candidates.
- b) 3.5 years full time equivalent for Research Doctorate candidates.

Variations to this duration can be made for joint scholarship schemes such as the China Scholarship Council.

7.4. Changes to scholarship duration

- a) The duration of a scholarship will be reduced by periods of study prior to the commencement of the scholarship.
- b) If the scholarship is suspended while the candidate is studying, the duration of the scholarship will be reduced by the period of suspension.

- c) The duration of a living allowance scholarship will be extended by periods of approved extended sick leave and/or parental leave as outlined in Section 8.

8. Leave

- a) Unless otherwise specified in the scholarship letter of offer, scholarship holders are entitled to the following types of leave. For the purposes of leave, a 'working day' is a week day (Monday to Friday). International candidates must check the conditions of their visa before applying for leave.

8.1. Annual leave

- a) Scholarship holders are entitled to 20 working days per annum of paid leave for recreational purposes. This leave is to be taken during the scholarship.
- b) Candidates should inform their supervisors when they take this leave.
- c) Leave cannot be accrued during the scholarship and the candidature and scholarship will not be extended by periods of paid annual leave taken.

8.2. Standard sick leave up to 10 working days

- a) Scholarship holders are entitled to 10 working days per annum of standard paid sick leave. This is within the regular award duration. Standard sick leave may also be used for candidates with family caring responsibilities where there are compassionate and compelling circumstances.
- b) Candidates should inform their supervisors when they take this leave.
- c) The scholarship will not be extended by periods of paid standard sick leave taken.

8.3. Extended sick leave

- a) Scholarship holders who have completed 12 months (full time equivalent) of their candidature are entitled to receive extended paid sick leave of up to a total of 60 working days where the candidate has insufficient sick leave entitlements available in Section 8.2.
- b) Extended sick leave may also be used for candidates with family caring responsibilities where there are compassionate and compelling circumstances.
- c) Applications for extended paid sick leave must be submitted to the GRS with an accompanying medical certificate and/or other appropriate documentation. Candidates will need endorsement from their supervisor.
- d) If extended sick leave is required for the majority of a Term, the candidate must take program leave for that Term. In such cases, the candidate will be paid the extended sick leave benefit while on leave. Candidature time will be extended by the number of terms of program leave taken.
- e) If a whole term of leave is not required, the duration of the scholarship will be extended by the duration of the extended sick leave.

8.4. Parental leave

- a) Scholarship holders who have completed 12 months (full time equivalent) of their candidature are entitled to receive paid parental leave for a birth or adoption.
- b) Parental leave must be claimed in first 12 months of child's life. In cases where candidates are not eligible for parental leave they can apply for extended sick leave, which is to be approved at the discretion of the Director, GRS.
- c) If the scholarship holder is the primary carer of the child, the holder is entitled to a maximum of 60 working days paid parental leave during the scholarship.
- d) If the scholarship holder is the partner of the primary carer of the child, the holder is entitled to a maximum of ten working days paid parental leave during the scholarship, at the time of the birth or adoption.
- e) Applications for parental leave must be submitted to the GRS with an accompanying medical certificate and/or other appropriate documentation. Candidates will need acknowledgement of the leave period from their supervisor.

- f) If parental leave is required for the majority of a Term, the candidate must take program leave for that Term. In such cases, the candidate will be paid the parental leave benefit while on leave. Candidature time will be extended by the number of terms of program leave taken.
- g) If a whole term of leave is not required, the duration of the scholarship will be extended by the duration of the parental leave.

8.5. Program Leave

- a) Scholarship holders may apply for unpaid program leave in accordance with the [Variation of Candidature Procedure](#).
- b) Any periods of approved unpaid program leave will not impact the total duration of the scholarship although the candidature time will be extended by the number of terms of program leave taken.

9. Income from other sources

- a) The Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2017 state that for RTP Scholarship stipend holders must not be receiving income from another source to support their HDR program (such as another scholarship) if that income is greater than 75% of the stipend rate. For scholarships not funded from the RTP, this restriction does not necessarily apply.
- b) Income from sources not related to the candidate's HDR program is not taken into account in this 75% rule.
- c) International candidates must check the conditions of their visa before undertaking paid employment.

10. Variation of program

Scholarship holders may request changes to their research program during their candidature. The process for requesting changes is outlined in the [Variation of Candidature Procedure](#). Changes to the research program may impact a scholarship as outlined below.

10.1. Change to research program and/or supervision

- a) Candidates must check with their funding provider and scholarship terms and conditions before requesting any change to their research program or supervision.

10.2. Transferring from a Research Masters to a Research Doctorate

- a) A scholarship holder may continue to hold their scholarship if they have been approved for a transfer from a Research Masters program to a Research Doctorate program.
- b) The maximum duration of the scholarship will be that of the new program as outlined in Section 8.

10.3. Transferring from a Research Doctorate to a Research Masters

- a) If a scholarship holder transfers from a Research Doctorate to a Research Masters, the maximum duration of the scholarship will be 2 years (full-time equivalent) from the date that the candidate commenced the Doctoral HDR program.
- b) If the scholarship has already been held for more than 2 years (full-time equivalent), it will cease on the date of the transfer.

10.4. Transferring from another Higher Education Provider

- a) Candidates transferring from another Higher Education Provider to UNSW may be eligible for RTP scholarships, provided UNSW has sufficient RTP funds available and the other eligibility criteria set out in this procedure are satisfied.
- b) If the scholarship holder had previously held an RTP scholarship at the other HEP, the previous tenure holding the scholarship counts against the maximum duration determined in Section 7.

11. Termination

A scholarship will be terminated when the scholarship holder:

- a) Has their candidature discontinued.

- b) Withdraws from the HDR Program.
- c) Ceases to be enrolled and has not requested a period of leave.
- d) Ceases to meet eligibility requirements outlined in Section 5.
- e) Changes research topic and/or supervision which are not supported by the particular scholarship as indicated in Section 10.1.
- f) Submits their thesis for examination.
- g) Exhausts the maximum duration as outlined in Section 8.
- h) Does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of leave.
- i) Ceases to be enrolled full-time and does not have approval to receive the scholarship part-time in accordance with Section 3.7.
- j) Has not provided true, accurate and complete information in relation to their scholarship application and/or scholarship tenure.
- k) Is in breach of this procedure or any condition of the scholarship as outlined in the scholarship letter of offer.

12. RTP or other Funding Acknowledgements

- a) Candidates in receipt of an Australian Government RTP stipend or RTP fees offset must acknowledge the Australian Government's contribution during and after completion of the HDR program. The acknowledgement must include the mention of support through the Australian Government Research Training Program as follows:

This research has been supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship.

This acknowledgement should be included in any publications arising from the thesis as well as the thesis itself. It should be included in the front matter of the thesis and/or in the thesis acknowledgements section.

- b) All HDR candidates in receipt of other sources of funding must acknowledge the Funder's contribution during and after completion of the HDR program. Suggested text is as follows:

This research has been supported by an [insert scholarship name].

This acknowledgement should be included in any publications arising from the thesis as well as the thesis itself. It should be included in the front matter of the thesis and/or in the thesis acknowledgements section.

13. Enrichment activities

If opportunities for 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 must be informed regarding the impact on the scholarship duration and stipend rates.

14. Grievance process

Grievances about the application of these procedures are managed in accordance with the [Student Complaint Procedure](#).

Accountabilities	
Responsible Officer	Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Training and 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: Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2017 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) Disability Standards for Education (2005) Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (Cth) Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (Cth)
Parent Document (Policy)	Higher Degree Research Scholarships Policy
Supporting Documents	Nil
Related Documents	Admissions Policy Admissions to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure Conditions for Award of Doctor of Philosophy Policy Conditions for Award of Master by Research Policy Conditions for Award of Master of Philosophy Policy Facilities and Resources to Support Higher Degree Research Candidates Guidelines Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy Higher Degree Research Supervision Procedure Student Complaint Procedure Variation of Candidature Procedure
Superseded Documents	Higher Degree Research Scholarships Procedure, v2.0
File Number	2017/15228
Definitions and Acronyms	
Compassionate and compelling circumstances	Circumstances beyond a candidate's control which have an impact on the candidate's ability to study and/or undertake research. This includes serious illness or injury to the candidate or close family member, pregnancy or childbirth, caring responsibilities for dependants, death of a family member, a traumatic experience (such as an accident or crime), a major political upheaval or natural disaster in the candidate's home country requiring emergency travel or disruption to studies, and visa processing delays.
Equivalent Full-Time Study Load (EFTSL)	A measure of study load for one year on a normal full-time basis. At UNSW 1 EFTSL is defined as 48 units of credit (UOC).
FTE	Full-time equivalent
Full-time	Full-time enrolment for one year is defined as 48 UOC which equates to 1.0 Equivalent Full-time Student Load (EFTSL).
HDR	A higher degree by research which is a Research Doctorate or Research Masters program for which at least two-thirds of the student load for the program is required as research work.
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.
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, a research block grant provided to the University by the Australian Government to support candidates undertaking a Higher Degree by Research.			
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 which covers the tuition fee liability 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.			
TFS	Tuition Fee Scholarship (TFS) including a living allowance Stipend and a UNSW fees offset.			
UPA	University Postgraduate Award, a living allowance stipend for a domestic HDR candidate and a UNSW fees offset.			
UIPA	University International Postgraduate Award, a living allowance stipend for an International HDR candidate and a UNSW fees offset.			
UNSW Fees offset	A type of scholarship which covers the tuition fee liability that would otherwise be payable by an International HDR candidate.			
Revision History				
Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
1.0	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Infrastructure)	28 June 2017	28 June 2017	New Procedure.
1.1	Director of Governance	7 July 2017	7 July 2017	Administrative update to the following sections: Purpose, 1, 2.1(a), Legislative Compliance and Definitions.
1.2	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research	9 February 2018	9 February 2018	Minor amendments: sections 1; 4.3; 4.5; 4.6; 5.3; 11.
1.3	President and Vice-Chancellor	5 November 2018	1 January 2019	Minor amendment to accommodate 3+ academic calendar
2.0	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research & Enterprise	17 August 2021	17 August 2021	Full review
2.1	Vice-Chancellor and President	12 December 2023	12 December 2023	Minor revisions including update to position titles. Changes in response to TEQSA/National Code and update to UNSW scholarship award rate.