

Higher Degree Research Scholarship Instruction

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This instruction applies to the following Higher Degree Research (HDR) scholarships at UNSW:
 - Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) scholarships (including RTP stipends RTP Fee Offsets, and RTP allowances)
 - University Postgraduate Awards (UPA)
 - University International Postgraduate Awards (UIPA)
 - Tuition Fee Scholarship (TFS) including a living allowance stipend
 - Strategic Scholarship schemes, including any Industry engaged scholarships
 - School/faculty merit based Scholarships (includes Research Centres and Institutes).
- 1.2. The following scholarships are not in scope:
 - School/faculty top-up scholarships
 - Scholarships provided by external institutions, donors, sponsors and countries.
- 1.3. This instruction should be read in conjunction with the [Higher Degree Research Policy](#), the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Degree Research Instruction](#), and related procedures and instructions, and the candidate's scholarship terms and conditions.

2. Eligibility

- 2.1. To be eligible for a RTP scholarship or fees offset, candidates must meet the eligibility requirements set out in the Higher Education Support (Commonwealth Scholarships) Guidelines 2025:
 - The candidate must be either a domestic or international student as defined in the *Higher Education Support Act* and be enrolled in a UNSW HDR program.
 - In relation to an RTP Tuition Fees Offset, the candidate must not receive an equivalent award or scholarship from the Commonwealth designed to offset HDR tuition fees.
- 2.2. Applicants must also meet the following UNSW eligibility requirements:
 - Meet the admission requirements for a UNSW HDR program as outlined in the [Higher Degree Research Admissions Instruction](#).
 - Be enrolled on a full-time basis unless approved for a part-time award in accordance with [section 9](#).
 - Be enrolled at a UNSW approved location and meet the minimum residency requirement of two-thirds of their degree at the University or a UNSW affiliated institution during their candidature.
 - Not receive an equivalent award or scholarship.
 - Meet the UNSW eligibility criteria for a RTP Tuition Fees Offset:
 - Be a Domestic candidate whose proposed candidature meets the objectives of the RTP scheme.
 - Be an International candidate who is awarded an RTP living allowance stipend.
- 2.3. To continue receiving a scholarship, candidates must:
 - Spend 35-40 hours per week on their research (full-time) or 15-20 hours per week (part-time) for a total of 48 weeks per year.

3. Application process

- 3.1. Scholarship application rounds for domestic and international applicants are advertised on the UNSW website.
- 3.2. Applicants need to submit a complete application before the advertised deadline. Incomplete applications are put into the next application round once all outstanding documentation and information has been received.
- 3.3. Prospective candidates can apply for a scholarship at the same time as applying for admission using the UNSW system.
- 3.4. Enrolled candidates can apply for a scholarship providing they have not completed more than 5 terms of enrolment (full-time) or 10 terms (part-time). Candidates send their application directly to the GRS using the process outlined on the [HDR Hub](#).

4. Application outcomes

- 4.1. Scholarships are awarded based on merit, and in accordance with the objectives of the RTP scheme and the research excellence, research capacity, and equity and diversity goals of UNSW.
- 4.2. Priority is given to applicants who:
 - Have not already been awarded a research degree at the level for which they are applying.
 - Have not already been awarded a scholarship to cover living costs.
- 4.3. All scholarship holders are provided with a scholarship letter of offer which includes the terms and conditions for the particular scholarship awarded.
- 4.4. Scholarship holders may defer the commencement of their scholarship. Details about conditions for deferrals are outlined in the scholarship letter of offer.

5. Faculty and school scholarships

- 5.1. Faculties and schools are responsible for the application, selection and outcome processes for faculty and school scholarships.
- 5.2. Once an applicant has been selected, the faculty/school provides the applicant with the outcome, and notifies the GRS who then arranges payment.

6. Residency change

- 6.1. If an International applicant is granted a Australian permanent residency or citizenship during the application, their application is assessed for a domestic scholarship.
- 6.2. If an International applicant is granted a change of residency after they have received a scholarship offer but before they enrol in their degree, their application is assessed for a domestic scholarship in the next scholarship application round. This may delay their commencement.
- 6.3. If an International scholarship holder is granted a change of residency after they have enrolled, this will be managed through the standard UNSW change of residency process outlined on the [UNSW website](#).

7. Benefits

- 7.1. The benefits for each HDR scholarship is outlined in the scholarship offer letter. They may include:
 - living allowance stipend
 - tuition fee offset
 - overseas student health cover (OSHC) allowance
 - relocation allowance

- thesis allowance.
- 7.2. A living allowance stipend provides financial support to a candidate to assist with their general living costs while undertaking an HDR program.
 - 7.3. Scholarships at the maximum RTP rate may be offered when it aligns to the University's strategy. These are advertised on the HDR Recruitment website as and when they are available.
 - 7.4. Living allowance stipends are paid on a fortnightly basis into a nominated Australian bank account opened in the candidate's name.
 - 7.5. Living allowance stipends paid at the full-time rate are not considered taxable income.
 - 7.6. Living allowance stipends for approved part-time candidates are awarded at 50% of the full-time scholarship rate. Part-time scholarships are considered taxable income by the Australian Government.
 - 7.7. 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 8](#) below. If a candidate is enrolled longer than the maximum duration of the scholarship, they may become liable for any remaining tuition fees.
 - 7.8. Scholarships for International candidates may include an allowance for OSHC at the single rate of UNSW's preferred provider for the duration of the scholarship. This rate is advertised on the [UNSW website](#), and must be claimed when the candidate commences their degree.
 - 7.9. A scholarship holder may claim a relocation allowance upon commencement of their HDR program. To claim this allowance, the candidate must meet the following criteria:
 - Resided outside Australia or outside NSW and the ACT at the time that they applied for the scholarship.
 - Did not study at an institution in NSW or the ACT within the 12 months prior to applying for the scholarship.
 - 7.10. A scholarship holder may be able to claim a thesis allowance to help cover the costs of producing a thesis once they have submitted their thesis for examination. The claim must be submitted before they have completed their degree.

8. Scholarship duration

- 8.1. Unless the scholarship offer letter states otherwise, the standard scholarship/award duration outlined in Table 1 applies:

Table 1. Scholarship/award duration (full-time equivalent)

Scholarship/Award	Duration: research master	Duration: doctoral degree
RTP Tuition Fee Offset	2 years	Domestic candidates: 4 years International candidates: 3.5 years
Living allowance stipends	2 years	3.5 years
Tuition Fee Scholarships	2 years	3.5 years

- 8.2. The standard duration of a Tuition Fee Scholarship may be changed for joint scholarship schemes such as those arranged with international sponsors.
- 8.3. The standard scholarship duration will be reduced by relevant periods of study completed before the commencement of the scholarship.
- 8.4. The award duration will be increased by the length of any approved scholarship suspension while the candidate is studying. Suspensions of up to six months will be considered under specific circumstances, such as to undertake an Industry Internship.

- 8.5. The duration of a living allowance scholarship is extended by periods of approved extended sick leave, parental leave, and paid family and domestic violence leave as outlined in [section 12](#).

9. Part-time awards

- 9.1. International candidates can only receive a part-time award if permitted under the conditions of their visa.
- 9.2. Part-time living allowance stipends are awarded at 50% of the full-time scholarship rate, for the full-time equivalent duration, and are considered taxable by the Australian Government.

10. Withdrawal of a scholarship offer

- 10.1. UNSW reserves the right to withdraw an offer and/or cancel the enrolment of a candidate in cases where:
- An offer is made in error.
 - An offer is made based on incomplete, inaccurate, fraudulent or misleading information supplied by the applicant or certifying authority. In such cases, fees paid may be forfeited.
 - Funding prior to commencement of the scholarship is no longer available.
 - An applicant does not provide information required by the University within the timeframe specified.
 - An applicant has failed to disclose prior misconduct findings at any higher education provider.
 - UNSW is not satisfied that an international applicant or candidate meets the Genuine Temporary Entrant or Genuine Student requirements set by the Department of Home Affairs.

11. Income from other sources

- 11.1. Scholarship recipients must not receive an additional primary or an equivalent award or scholarship, covering living stipend and/or tuition fees.
- 11.2. International candidates must check the conditions of their visa before undertaking paid employment.

12. Leave

- 12.1. Unless the scholarship letter of offer states otherwise, scholarship holders are entitled to the types of paid leave listed in [Table 2](#).
- 12.2. Unless the scholarship letter of offer states otherwise, scholarship holders may also take unpaid program leave for one term or longer by following the process in the [Higher Degree Research Variation of Candidature Instruction](#).
- 12.3. For the purposes of leave, a “working day” is a week day (Monday to Friday).
- 12.4. International candidates should check the conditions of their visa before applying for leave.

Table 2. Paid scholarship leave

This table applies to all RTP, RTPI, UPA and UIPA stipend holders. TFS stipend holders must check their scholarship conditions for their leave entitlement(s). Paid scholarship leave applies only to the stipend allowance. The tuition fee offset cannot be extended.

	Description	Duration	Eligibility	Application process
Recreation leave	• Paid leave for recreational purposes (e.g. holidays). • Candidate remains enrolled and scholarship is not extended.	Full-time: 20 working days per year Part-time: 10 working days per year Accrues from one year to the next.	Available throughout candidature.	Discuss plans with supervisor.
Personal leave	• Paid leave for periods of ill health and family carer responsibilities. • Candidate remains enrolled and scholarship is not extended.	Full-time: 10 working days per year Part-time: 5 working days per year Accrues from one year to the next.	Available throughout candidature.	Discuss plans with supervisor.
Additional personal leave	• Paid leave benefit for periods of ill health and family carer responsibilities. • Available only when personal leave is used up. • If needed for the majority of a term, recipient must take program leave. Leave benefit is paid during program leave. • The scholarship duration is extended for the period of paid leave.	Up to 60 working days in total full-time equivalent (FTE) (84 days).	While in receipt of the scholarship.	If program leave is required, use <i>Variation of Candidature form</i> in GRIS. Alternatively, email GRS Candidature Management Officer. Attach supporting documentation and supervisor support.
Parental leave	• Paid parental leave benefit for a birth or adoption. • If needed for the majority of a term, recipient must take program leave. Leave benefit is paid during program leave. • The scholarship duration is extended for the period of paid leave.	Primary carer: 20 weeks for each birth (FTE) Partner of primary carer: up to 10 working days in total (FTE).	After 12 months enrolment while in receipt of the scholarship. Must be claimed on the birth or adoption of the child.	If program leave is required, use <i>Variation of Candidature form</i> in GRIS. Alternatively, email GRS Candidature Management Officer. Attach supporting documentation and supervisor support.
Family and domestic violence leave	• Paid leave to support scholarship holders affected by situations of violence or abuse in their domestic life. • The scholarship duration is extended for the period of leave.	Full-time: 10 working days per year (FTE). Part-time: 5 working days per year (FTE).	While in receipt of the scholarship.	Email supporting documentation and supervisor support to GRS Candidature

	Description	Duration	Eligibility	Application process
		Does not accrue.		Management Officer.

13. Variation of candidature

- 13.1. The process for making changes to a candidature is outlined in the [HDR Variation of Candidature Instruction](#). Some candidature changes impact HDR scholarships.
- 13.2. Scholarship holders should check the scholarship terms and conditions and contact their funding provider before requesting any change to their research program or supervision.
- 13.3. Scholarship holders may apply for permission to work away from a UNSW location due to research reasons, using the variation of candidature process.
- 13.4. If a scholarship holder is found to be working away without permission, their scholarship (including any tuition fees offsets) will be terminated.
- 13.5. A scholarship holder who is approved to transfer from a Research Master level program to a Doctoral level program may continue to receive their scholarship. The maximum scholarship duration will be that of the new program, as outlined in [Table 2](#).
- 13.6. If a scholarship holder transfers from a Doctoral level program to a Research Master level program, the maximum duration of the scholarship will be two years (FTE) from the date that the candidate commenced the Doctorate. If the scholarship has already been held for more than two years (full-time equivalent), it will end on the date of the transfer.
- 13.7. If a candidate transfers from another institution to UNSW, they may be eligible to apply for a UNSW scholarship. If the candidate has already withdrawn from the prior degree, they can apply for a scholarship if their prior consumption is less than described in [clause 3.4](#). The candidate can select scholarship consideration using the UNSW apply online system, when they apply for admission to UNSW.
- 13.8. If the candidate previously held a primary scholarship at the other institution, the time that they held the previous scholarship will be deducted from the standard scholarship duration in [Table 2](#).

14. Termination

- 14.1. UNSW will terminate an HDR scholarship if the scholarship holder:
 - Has their candidature discontinued.
 - Withdraws from the HDR Program.
 - Is no longer enrolled and has not requested a period of leave.
 - No longer meets the eligibility requirements outlined in this instruction.
 - Changes research topic and/or supervision and, as a result of this change, no longer meets the scholarship terms and conditions.
 - Submits their thesis for examination.
 - Remains enrolled after the maximum scholarship duration has ended.
 - Does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of leave.
 - Has changed from full-time to part-time enrolment and does not have approval to receive the scholarship part-time.
 - Has not provided true, accurate and complete information in relation to their scholarship application and/or scholarship tenure.
 - Is in breach of this instruction, UNSW policies, or any condition of the scholarship as outlined in the scholarship letter of offer.

15. RTP or other funding acknowledgements

- 15.1. Candidates who hold an Australian Government RTP stipend or RTP fees offset must acknowledge the Australian Government's contribution to their candidature during enrolment and after completion of their degree in their thesis, on their ORCID, and in any publications arising from their HDR research. The acknowledgement must include the following statement:

This research was supported by the Commonwealth through an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship [DOI: <https://doi.org/10.82133/C42F-K220>].

- 15.2. Candidates who hold other sources of funding must acknowledge the funder's contribution to their candidature during enrolment and after completion of their degree, in both their thesis and any publications arising from their HDR research. Suggested text is as follows:

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

16. Industry engagement and other enrichment activities

- 16.1. If a candidate undertakes an industry placement, research internship, or similar professional practice activities, it may impact their scholarship e.g. change to scholarship duration, changed stipend rate.
- 16.2. In some cases, an agreement needs to be signed. In others, a Variation of Candidature may be required.
- 16.3. Candidates who take up these opportunities should contact the GRS to ensure that their scholarship entitlements and eligibility are met, and all required documentation has been completed.

17. Appeals and complaints

- 17.1. Appeals and complaints about the application of these procedures are managed in accordance with the [Complaints Management and Investigations Policy](#).

18. Revision History

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Date of UHDC endorsement	Effective date	Sections modified
1.0	Dean of Graduate Research	28 July 2026	10 July 2026	3 August 2026	This is a new instruction
1.1	Director, Graduate Research School	21 September 2026		21 September 2026	7.10 minor correction. Section 12, Table 2: minor change.

Effective: 21 September 2026

Responsible: PVCRT & Dean of Graduate Research

Lead: Director, GRS