UNSW SYDNEY

2025 Higher Degree Research Guide

Define the Future



"My supervisors have always made sure that I have access to all the equipment that I need. That means that I can actually do the research the way I want."

Ankita Singh
Engineering



"I get to work with some of the most established scholars in my field. And that was an opportunity that was too good to pass up."

Sujith Kumar
Arts, Design & Architecture



"My whole PhD wouldn't exist without UNSW, without my supervisors, without their collaboration. And I am very grateful for that."

Simon Lloyd
Arts, Design & Architecture



"When you know that your research can have a direct impact, that makes a difference."

Snow Li
Medicine & Health

Why UNSW

Welcome to UNSW Sydney, where you can define the future with innovative research.

You may think of yourself as a student, but we think of you as a professional researcher in the early stages of a long and vibrant career.

When you join the UNSW research community, you join a passionate collective of people who are using research to transform minds, transform lives, and transform the world.

You will become part of a collaborative team in your discipline area, and your outputs will make a valuable contribution to the university's broader research reputation.

UNSW is an internationally acclaimed teaching and research powerhouse and our academics are recognised as global leaders in their fields.

As a Higher Degree Research candidate, you will have access to world-class facilities and interact with industry leaders as you build the skills, expertise and networks you need to succeed in your future career.

Our commitment to research excellence is shown by the expansion of our industry PhD programs and our wide range of scholarships – including the flagship Scientia PhD Scholarship Scheme which is designed to help candidates build their research and professional skills and improve the lives of people in local and global communities.

But don't just take our word for it. Scientia PhD candidate Sujith Kumar says: "There are many reasons why I would definitely recommend anyone to come and study here at UNSW. You'll be well resourced, there's care put into ensuring students are supported and there's a whole ethos of collaboration.

"Come here if you want to be in an environment that is nurturing, that is serious about high quality scholarship, and also very serious about engaging communities ethically."

Programs

UNSW offers three main higher degree research programs: Doctor of Philosophy, Masters by Research, and Master of Philosophy. Each of these degrees requires candidates to undertake an original and critical research project that makes a significant contribution to existing knowledge. Candidates carry out their research under the supervision of some of the world's leading researchers.

In addition, to support candidates seeking enhanced industry engagement opportunities, UNSW offers structured PhD programs and Professional Doctorates.

Check your eligibility for all our higher degree research programs at: unsw.edu.au/research/hdr

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Make a significant and original contribution to knowledge in your field by undertaking a substantial independent research project under the supervision of an expert in your field, with access to world-class facilities.

Duration 3 – 4 years full time or 6 – 8 years part time

Availability Offered in all Faculties

Assessment A thesis of no more than 100,000 words. May include some coursework

Entry requirement

- A Bachelor degree with first or upper second class Honours, or an equivalent qualification, or
- A Masters by Research with a substantial research component, or an equivalent qualification
- Other tertiary institution qualifications may be considered.

Masters by Research

Make an original contribution to knowledge in your field by undertaking a substantial independent research project under the supervision of an expert in your field, with access to world-class facilities. Given the timeframe, the Masters by Research is more limited in scope that the PhD Program.

Duration 1.5 – 2 years full time or 3 – 4 years part time

Availability Offered in most Faculties

Assessment A thesis of no more than 75,000 words. May include some coursework

Entry requirement

- A four-year Bachelor degree with honours, or an equivalent qualification
- Other tertiary institution qualifications may be considered

Professional Doctorate

Undertake a unique PhD program that combines doctoral research with professional practice. Available in a range of fields. For more information, please visit the website for your preferred Faculty at unsw.edu.au

Duration 3 – 4 years full time or 6 – 8 years part time

Availability Offered in most Faculties

Assessment A thesis of no more than 75,000 words. May include some coursework

Entry requirement

- A Bachelor degree with first or upper second class Honours, or an equivalent qualification, or
- A Masters by Research with a substantial research component, or an equivalent qualification
- Other tertiary institution qualifications may be considered.

Master of Philosophy

Combining coursework and a thesis, this program is ideal if you have limited research experience and are seeking a pathway to the PhD program.

Duration 1.5 – 2 years full time or 3 – 4 years part time

Availability Offered in most Faculties

Assessment A thesis of no more than 40,000 words, plus a short coursework program

Entry requirement

- A Bachelor degree with an appropriate overall grade as specified by the Faculty Higher Degree Committee.
- Other tertiary institution qualifications may be considered.



Industry Engaged Research Program

Fast track your future career with an industry engaged research program.

This program will provide you with an opportunity to work closely with an Industry partner on an in-depth real-world problem, and gain insights into careers outside academia.

You will be guided by both the Industry partner and UNSW academics, who will jointly supervise your project and provide you with expert guidance and support to expand your research skills at the intersection of academia and industry, while embedded within UNSW's world class research environment.

For more information visit:
unsw.edu.au/research/hdr/industry-engagement

Scholarships

UNSW offers a range of prestigious scholarships to help you conduct innovative research and define the future. Our scholarships provide a range of benefits – such as living allowances and tuition fees as well as funding and supplements for travel. Scholarships are available to both domestic and international research candidates, funded either directly by UNSW or by the Australian Government.

In addition, we offer a number of UNSW/ Home Country Joint Scholarships to international candidates to promote international collaboration. Many faculties and schools also provide their own full or top-up scholarships for specific research projects.

To be considered for a scholarship at UNSW, you must meet all the requirements for admission to your preferred degree – as well as the eligibility rules for the scholarship.

Visit unsw.edu.au/research/hdr/scholarships for more details about all our scholarships and how to apply.



Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship

2025 value
Domestic candidates:
$38,438 per annum (indexed annually) and some additional allowances

International candidates:
$37,684 per annum (indexed annually), tuition fees and some additional allowances

Awarded by Australian Government

Length of Scholarship 3.5 years for a PhD, 2 years for a research Masters

University Postgraduate Award (UPA)

2025 value
$38,438 per annum (indexed annually), some additional allowances

Awarded by UNSW

Length of Scholarship 3.5 years for a PhD, 2 years for a research Masters

University International Postgraduate Award (UIPA)

For International candidates only
2025 value
$38,438 per annum (indexed annually), tuition fees and some additional allowances

Awarded by UNSW

Length of Scholarship 3.5 years for a PhD, 2 years for a research Masters

Tuition Fee Scholarship (TFS) plus a Research Stipend

For International candidates only
2025 value
$38,438 per annum (indexed annually), tuition fees

Awarded by UNSW (Tuition fees).
Faculty, School or Supervisor (Stipend)

Length of Scholarship 3.5 years for a PhD, 2 years for a research Masters

How to apply

1 Check your eligibility

UNSW offers a range of higher degree research programs which you can view at: unsw.edu.au/research/hdr

You can check if you are eligible for your preferred program and how likely you are to be considered for a scholarship using our self-assessment tool at unsw.edu.au/research/hdr

2 Find a research area

Investigate the research activities and projects currently being undertaken at UNSW and at the Faculty/School that aligns with your area of interest.

Search for potential supervisors at unsw.edu.au/research/hdr/find-a-supervisor.

You can also browse current higher degree research projects at: unsw.edu.au/research/hdr/find-a-supervisor#researchprojects.

3 Contacting supervisors

Once you have identified a potential UNSW supervisor in your area of interest, make contact with them to discuss your proposed research topic. It is important to meet with them – either in person or via a video call – to ensure your research interests are compatible and to gain their agreement to supervise you.

The supervisor will also be able to explain their supervisory philosophy and determine whether they have the resources to supervise your project.

You must provide proof of the supervisor's agreement when submitting your application.

Some Faculties require applicants to undertake an Expression of Interest (EOI) process prior to applying. For more information, please visit the website to check requirements research.unsw.edu.au/finding-supervisor

4 Develop a research description

Work with your chosen supervisor to develop a description of your research interests. This should be approximately one page in length and should include the following:

- Title of your research project
- Statement of the research problem
- Outline of how you plan to address the problem
- Details of any previous research and/or publications

5 Prepare your supporting documents

Required documents include:

- Supervisor's agreement to supervise project or EOI outcome
- Research description
- Resume
- Academic transcripts of all attempted and completed degrees (including grading system of the institution)
- Evidence of meeting the English language requirements (eg test)
- Genuine Temporary Entrant details

Some Faculties have additional requirements that must accompany your research description. unsw.edu.au/research/hdr/application

6 Submit your application online

Check the application dates before submitting your application: unsw.edu.au/research/hdr/application#panel-3

Apply online, attaching copies of all your supporting documents. You can apply for both admission and a scholarship using the same application form: applyonline.unsw.edu.au/login

Graduate Research School

Level 2, Rupert Myers Building (South Wing),
Kensington Campus, UNSW Sydney
T: +61 2 9385 5500
E: grs@unsw.edu.au
W: unsw.edu.au/research/hdr

Additional information

Key dates: unsw.edu.au/research/hdr/application#panel-3

Fees: unsw.edu.au/research/hdr/fees-and-costs

English language requirements: unsw.edu.au/english-requirements-policy

Accommodation: accommodation.unsw.edu.au

Student visas: international.unsw.edu.au/visas

CRICOS Provider Code: 00098G | ABN: 57 195 873 179
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COMPLIANCE: The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 sets out the legal framework governing delivery of education to overseas students studying in Australia on a student visa. UNSW in providing education services to overseas students complies with the ESOS Framework and the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 (The National Code).
A description of the ESOS framework can be found at the following link: https://internationaleducation.gov.au/Regulatory-Information/Pages/regulatoryinformation.aspx