

Research Higher Degree Scholarship Guidelines



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

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1. Context/Overview

These Guidelines support the University's commitment to funding Research Higher Degree candidates through living allowance and tuition fee scholarships according to academic merit and recruiting high calibre research degree candidates in areas of research strength.

2. Definitions

ADRT means Assistant Dean (Research Training);

APA means Australian Postgraduate Award funded by the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Changes, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE);

area of research strength means a discipline will usually be considered to be an area of strength if it achieved a ranking of 3, 4 or 5 in the most recent ERA rankings. Research being conducted within a Priority Research Centre should also be considered as occurring in an area of strength. For research that cannot satisfy these definitions, supervisors may make a specific proposal for classification of a project as falling within an area of research strength. These proposals must be supported by the relevant Head of School and ADRT,

closing date means 31 August for international applicants and 31 October for domestic applicants;

current/recent honours student (relative to opportunity) means a student either currently enrolled in an honours program including embedded honours programs, or a student who completed honours in the previous year. For example, for the 2014 round a current/recent honours student will be one who was enrolled in an honours program in 2013 or 2012. In addition, recipients of a University Medal (from any Australian University) will be considered a Current Honours Student if they completed honours in 2011 or later. Applicants who provide evidence to claim disadvantage on the grounds of ill health, pregnancy, carer responsibilities or other legitimate reason will also be ranked as a Current Honours Student to recognise the limited opportunity they have had to gain further experience or qualifications. All remaining applicants are ranked as '**Other**';

DIICCSRTE means Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education;

HDR means Higher Degree Research, a term widely used across the sector that is equivalent to a Research Higher Degree or Graduate Research Degree;

HEP means Higher Education Provider;

honours scholarship means a scholarship providing a \$1,000 lump-sum payment, made during honours study, with guaranteed PUNRSC funded by the Research Division. Available to high achieving, current domestic honours students;

IA means International Admissions;

IPRS means International Postgraduate Research Scholarship funded by **DIICCSRTE** (previously known as Endeavour IPRS). The primary benefit of an IPRS is payment of institutional tuition fees and overseas student health cover. Students who are awarded an IPRS at the University of Newcastle will also be awarded an APA to provide for living expenses;

main round means the period between the scholarship application closing date and the provision of scholarship offers;

OGS means Office of Graduate Studies;

PUNRSC means Provisional University of Newcastle Research Scholarship – Central which is identical to the UNRSC but is offered as part of an Honours Scholarship package to current domestic honours students and is conditional upon achieving Honours 1 and being offered admission into a RHD;

RHD means Research Higher Degree (also known as Higher Degree by Research or Research Degree) is a postgraduate research degree namely a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD);

RHD scholarship ranking committee means ADRT's from each Faculty and Dean, Graduate Studies;

UNIPRS means University of Newcastle International Postgraduate Research Scholarship. The primary benefit of a UNIPRS is an exemption scholarship for tuition fees. Students who are awarded a UNIPRS must also be awarded a living allowance scholarship including Overseas Student Health Cover and equivalent benefits to a UNRSC. The living allowance scholarship may be in the form of a UNRSC, UNRSC50:50, UNRSE or APAI;

UNRSC means University of Newcastle Postgraduate Research Scholarship – Central; a stipend funded in full by the Research Division;

UNRSC50:50 means University of Newcastle Postgraduate Research Scholarship – Central 50:50; a stipend funded equally by the Research Division and a Research Grant, School or Faculty.

3. Selection Criteria

The research scholarship selection criteria for applicants are listed in the Research Higher Degree Scholarship Procedures document. The research scholarship selection criteria will have components of academic achievement and research/scholarly attainments relative to opportunity.

4. Eligibility

An applicant must have been made an offer of admission to a research higher degree to be eligible for the offer of award of a research scholarship. In addition, to be considered for an IPRS, UNIPRS, APA, UNRSC or UNRSC50:50 scholarship the University requires that all applicants satisfy three fundamental criteria;

1. Students must have a minimum scholarship GPA of 5.25 out of 7;
2. Students must hold an Honours Class One or equivalent qualification;
3. Students must meet the University's English Proficiency Policy at the closing date for applications. In limited circumstances a relaxation of this rule may be sought by supervisors and Head of School to allow a student to be considered for scholarship despite not having satisfied the policy (Refer sections 8.2 and 10 of the Research Higher Degree Scholarship Procedures);

If additional applicants remain after all candidates meeting the eligibility have been offered a scholarship, any of the first three fundamental criteria listed above may be relaxed at the discretion of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

4.1. Excluded Students

Any international scholarship applicant who has been considered in a main round and was unsuccessful but commenced study as a self-funded or sponsored student regardless, may not be considered in another main round;

Applicants already enrolled in a research higher degree program who have completed more than two full-time equivalent semesters towards a research Master's or more than four full-time equivalent semesters towards a PhD at the commencement of the following academic year will not be considered for the award of a research scholarship.

4.2. Continuing Eligibility

- 4.2.1. Successful scholarship candidates must commence no later than 31 August, 2014.
- 4.2.2. Scholarship holders are normally required to undertake their studies 'on campus', however candidates may study at other locations for periods of less than one semester to undertake activities such as fieldwork. In exceptional circumstances, and on the recommendation of the Head of School, approval may be granted by the Dean of Graduate Studies for a scholarship holder to undertake their studies as an 'off campus' candidate.
- 4.2.3. All scholarship holders are also required to remain enrolled full time in their research higher degree unless approval has been granted to enrol part time due to specific carer requirements or medical condition as per the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2012](#).

4.2.4. The University also requires that scholars not work more than eight hours per week, Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, to remain eligible to receive scholarship payments.

4.3. Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)

The following except from the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2012](#) provides specific eligibility requirements for an APA;

2.10.1 Basic Eligibility Requirements

(1) To be eligible for an *APA*, a student must:

- (a) have completed a Bachelor Degree with First Class Honours, or be regarded by the *HEP* as having an equivalent level of attainment in accordance with paragraph 2.10.5 of these *Guidelines*; and
- (b) be undertaking a *HDR*; and
- (c) be enrolled as a full-time student, unless the *HEP* has approved a part-time *APA* for the student under paragraph 2.10.10 of these *Guidelines*; and
- (d) be a *domestic student*, as defined in the *Act* or an *international student*, as defined in these *Guidelines*; and
- (e) if undertaking:
 - (i) a *Research Masters*, not hold a *Research Doctorate* or a *Research Masters* or an equivalent research qualification; or
 - (ii) if undertaking a *Research Doctorate*, not hold a *Research Doctorate* or an equivalent research qualification; and
- (f) must not previously have held a Commonwealth-funded postgraduate research scholarship unless it was terminated within six months of the scholarship's payments commencing; and
- (g) must not be receiving an equivalent award, scholarship (excluding an *IPRS*) or salary providing a benefit greater than 75 per cent of the *APA* stipend rate to undertake the *HDR*. Income from sources unrelated to the course of study is not to be taken into account. This paragraph 2.10.1(g) does not apply to recipients of a *JRE - Engineering Cadetship*.

4.4. International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS)

The following except from the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2012](#) provides specific eligibility requirements for an IPRS;

3.10.1 Basic Eligibility Requirements

(1) To be eligible for an *IPRS*, a student must:

- (a) be an overseas student as defined in *the Act*; and
- (b) meet international student visa requirements as specified by the *DIAC*, including the requirement to purchase and maintain a standard Overseas Student Health Cover policy approved by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing; and
- (c) be commencing full-time enrolment for the first time in a *HDR* at a *HEP* in Australia that is an eligible scholarship provider under section 46-15 of *the Act*; and
- (d) be undertaking study in a subject area identified by the *HEP* as one of its areas of research concentration; and
- (e) not hold a research qualification regarded by the *HEP* to be equivalent to an Australian *Research Doctorate* or, if undertaking a *Research Masters*, not hold a research qualification regarded by the *HEP* to be equivalent to or higher than an Australian *Research Masters*; and
- (f) not have held an *AusAID* scholarship within the two years prior to commencing the *IPRS*; and
- (g) not be receiving a scholarship for which course tuition is a component under any other scholarship scheme to which the Australian Government makes a substantial contribution.

(2) For the sake of clarity, paragraph 3.10(1)(c) does not preclude students from undertaking a component of their course of study outside Australia. Notwithstanding paragraph 3.10(1)(c), students who:

- (a) commenced their *HDR* in the previous year but who, due to the timing of their applications and subsequent enrolment, were unable to apply for an *IPRS* in that year; or
- (b) commenced a *HDR* and terminated that enrolment within six months of commencement,

are to be considered to meet the criterion in paragraph 3.10(1)(c).

(3) *International students* holding a student visa must comply with the conditions of their visa.

5. Allocation of Scholarships

Up to 50 (subject to budget approval) full centrally funded scholarships will be offered as either UNRSC50:50 scholarships or UNRSC's.

5.1. Early Round Offers

5.1.1. Commonwealth Funded Scholarships

Any domestic student that has a score of greater than 16 out of 20, has a GPA of at least 6 out of 7 and meets all the eligibility criteria may be made an APA offer prior to the ranking

meeting. The score must have been approved by the relevant Head of School, ADRT and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

5.1.2. University Funded Scholarships

Any scholarship applicant, whether international or domestic, that has been awarded a score of greater than 14 out of 20 and has met all the eligibility requirements and for whom an approved 2014 UNRSC50:50 scholarship nomination form has been received may be made a scholarship offer outside of the ranking meeting. Funding must be available at the time of the nomination and the scholarship assessment score must have been approved by the relevant Head of School, ADRT and the Dean of Graduate Studies. These candidates will still be considered for an IPRS and/or APA during the ranking meeting.

5.2. Ranking Meeting Order of Allocation

5.2.1. International applicants

IPRS scholarships will be allocated first according to the institution merit lists and necessarily in areas of research strength. The exact number of these is normally advised by DIICSRTE in mid December. As a guide, seven to eight IPRS's have been offered in recent years. Successful IPRS candidates will also be considered for an APA living allowance scholarship. The 50 centrally funded scholarships (or up to 100 x 50:50 UNRSC's) less any already allocated outside of the round, will remain for allocation between international and domestic candidates. UNRSC50:50 scholarships will be given priority over full UNRSC's in order to maximise the number of scholarships offered from available funds. Faculties nominate suitable candidates for UNIPRS and UNRSC50:50 scholarships based on the funding availability in the Faculty and on strategic research direction.

5.2.2. Domestic applicants

Remaining APA's left after the Early Round Offers have been made will be allocated first and according to the institution merit lists. The award of a PUNRSC represents an assessment by the relevant Faculty that the recipient should be ranked highly amongst the general cohort of domestic scholarship applicants; any student with a PUNRSC will therefore be considered for an APA offer conditional upon achieving Honours Class One.

A maximum of 85 APA's will be offered until DIISRTE confirm actual APA numbers for 2014 in mid December. This figure allows for a number of expected declines. UNRSC50:50 scholarships will be allocated next from Faculty nominations of suitable candidates based on the funding availability in the Faculty and on strategic research direction. These will be allocated as a priority in order to maximise the number of scholarships offered.

5.2.3. Full UNRSC offers to Domestic and International Applicants

If after all eligible UNRSC50:50 nominations have been considered funding remains available to support full UNRSC scholarships, these will be allocated to either domestic or international students in line with the institutions merit lists and strategic priorities as identified by the Dean of Graduate Studies and in accordance with NeW Directions.

5.2.4. Centrally Funded Scholarship Top-Ups

5.2.4.1. Vice Chancellor's Awards

Up to three of the top ranked APA applicants will also receive the Vice Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Research Candidates which is a scholarship supplementation of \$10,000 per annum for the duration of the APA.

5.2.4.2. University Medalist Top-Ups

Candidates who are offered an APA and who also receive a University Medal, will be eligible for a \$10,000 p.a. top up which will be funded 50% centrally and 50% from the Faculty. This is subject to Faculty participation in the initiative. If the candidate has also been nominated for a Vice Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Research Candidates, the University Medal top up will be reduced in accordance with the maximum top up allowed under the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2012](#).

6. Flexibility

An ADRT can make a case to the RHD Scholarship Ranking Committee to allocate one central scholarship to an exceptional student who for some reason does not fit the formula driven calculation. The flexibility may take into account quality of publications and university attended.

7. Award of Scholarships

The University will award research scholarships to eligible applicants according to the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2012](#).

7.1. Commonwealth Funded Scholarships

APA and IPRS scholarships must be awarded as part of a competitive application process and to students who show exceptional research potential who will be enrolled in a Research Higher Degree at the University. In addition, IPRS scholarships must also be awarded to students whose research project will be in an area of research strength for the University. At least one domestic scholarship will be awarded to an eligible indigenous applicant wherever possible.

7.2. University Funded Scholarships

The University will also award UNRSCs and UNRSC50:50's, including UNIPRS Tuition Fee Scholarships to eligible applicants based on [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2012](#) but with the following exceptions:

- recipients would not normally have previously held a postgraduate research scholarship of

any kind for the same level of award, but if so, are limited to a maximum previous tenure of 12 months;

- UNRSCs and UNRSC50:50's may be awarded to students with Honours Class Two Division One if any remain after all eligible Honours Class One applicants have received a scholarship. The Dean of Graduate Studies will consider these on a case by case basis.
- UNIPRSs will not be strictly limited to areas of research strength however, those areas will be given priority.

8. Tenure

Where a successful applicant has already completed part of the research degree, the period of scholarship support will be reduced accordingly.

9. Transfer of Scholarship

APA/IPRS recipients at other institutions who wish to transfer to the University of Newcastle may only continue to receive their APA/IPRS if there is sufficient funding available at the University of Newcastle to do so. This will be determined by the Dean of Graduate Studies, external to the main round of scholarships. All other scholarship types are not transferable to or from another University.

10. Confidentiality

The deliberations and decisions of Faculties, Committees and/or delegated officers relating to allocation, selection and award of scholarships are confidential.

11. Appeals Procedure

Applicants for research scholarships whose applications have been unsuccessful may lodge an appeal against the outcome. Appeals will only be considered on issues of administrative process, not against academic evaluations in the assessment of equivalent Honours status or the decisions of the Faculty or any committee in relation to the scoring process.

The appeal must be in writing, include a concise statement of the reasons for the appeal, and be lodged with the Dean of Graduate Studies, Office of Graduate Studies, the Chancellery, within 28 days of the date of the letter advising the outcome of the application for the scholarship.

The Dean and/or nominee(s) will review the administrative processes taken and will take into account the applicant's reasons for the appeal, the information contained in the original

application for a scholarship, and Research Higher Degree Scholarships Guidelines and Research Higher Degree Scholarships Procedures.

The outcome of the review will be reported to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), who will determine the outcome of the appeal as either:

1. the administrative procedures for scholarship selection were applied correctly, and the application is unsuccessful;
2. the administrative procedures for scholarship selection were not applied correctly, but the variation in the ranking of the application was not sufficient for the applicant to be awarded a scholarship, and the application is unsuccessful; or
3. the administrative procedures for scholarship selection were not applied correctly, and a scholarship will be awarded.

The outcome of the appeal will be determined within 28 days of the date of receipt of the written appeal.

12. Delegations and Relaxing Provision

If required, the Dean of Graduate Studies, or nominee, may act under delegated authority to resolve urgent matters relating to award of scholarships. In exceptional circumstances arising in a particular case, the Dean of Graduate Studies may relax any provision of these Guidelines other than those prescribed by the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2012](#).

13. Review

ADRT's will be asked to seek and provide feedback on the Research Higher Degree Guidelines and Procedures following the annual main round regarding the allocation and award of scholarships prior to the promulgation of Guidelines and Procedures for the subsequent year.

14. Essential Supporting Documents

Research Higher Degree Scholarship Procedures

15. Related Documents

English Proficiency Relaxation Request Form

English Proficiency Policy

Grade Point Average Proposal Form

Honours Class One Equivalency Form

ADDITIONAL DATA REQUIRED

Key Words

Research Higher Degree

RHD

Scholarship

Guidelines

Positions

Identify the following positions in line with the key below;

Policy Sponsor: Dean, Graduate Studies

Policy Owner: Executive Officer – Research Recruitment, Admissions and Scholarships

Policy Contact Position: Senior Graduate Studies Officer – Research Recruitment, Admissions and Scholarships

For Official Use:

The following data will be entered after the document is approved.

Date Approved:

Approval Authority: **Research Training Sub Committee**