



GUIDELINES

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM (RTP) SCHOLARSHIPS – **ACADEMIC PATHWAY SCHEME**

Section 1 - Audience

- (1) These guidelines apply to University of Newcastle (University) academics and PhD applicants intending to participate in the **Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarships – Academic Pathway Scheme**.

Section 2 - Executive Summary

- (2) This document supports the University's commitment to the recruitment and funding of higher degree by research candidates in strategic areas of research engagement through the provision of living allowance and tuition fee scholarships.
- (3) The University offers a limited number of these prestigious Australian Government Research Training Program funded scholarships to selected applicants, who have demonstrated a proven capacity for research, academic merit and potential to develop the requisite skills to make an ongoing impact in their academic careers.
- (4) This scholarship round aligns with the Vice-Chancellor's aim of retaining the best and brightest students in the region. Priority is given to applicants who, within the past two years, have received a First Class Honours from the University or an equivalent University award as determined by the relevant School or College.
- (5) Scholarship recipients will be admitted to a Doctoral Degree with the Academic Career Preparation (ACP) pathway included as a component of the program.
- (6) This document should be read in conjunction with the Research Training Program Scholarship Policy

Section 3 – Definitions

ACP means Academic Career Preparation pathway, an academic training stream undertaken in conjunction with a University of Newcastle PhD program. Admission to the pathway is limited to candidates who have been awarded, through a competitive process, an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Domestic applicants are either Australian citizens, New Zealand citizens (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand), Australian permanent residents or

Australian humanitarian visa holders.

GPA is the Grade Point Average calculated over a set of courses or specified number of courses at a particular level as per the Grade Point Average (GPA) Calculation Guideline.

PhD is a Doctor of Philosophy degree, referred to as a Doctoral Degree (Research) by the Australian Qualifications Framework.

University means the University of Newcastle.

University medallist means a graduate who has been awarded a University Medal from the University of Newcastle.

Section 4 – Eligibility

- (7) Applications will be considered for prospective domestic candidates applying for PhD study only.
- (8) Applicants must be able to commence their PhD program on 1 March 2027. Applicants who are unable to commence by this date should apply in a future scholarship round.
- (9) Applicants applying for the Master of Philosophy program will not be considered for the scholarship.
- (10) Applicants must satisfy the fundamental admission assessment criteria:
 - a. Applicants must meet the [admissions criteria](#) for entry into the PhD program; and
 - b. Applicants must have support from a supervisor who is a member of the University's academic staff.
 - c. Applicants must align their proposed research project with the University research priority areas.
- (11) Applicants who are University medalists will also be considered for the University Medallist Scholarship Top Up.

Section 5 – Application Process

- (12) Prospective applicants must submit a formal [online application](#) for admission and scholarship by no later than AEST 11.59pm 30 November 2026.
- (13) Each applicant must also be nominated by a University academic using the Australian Government Research Training Program – Academic Career Pathway [Scholarship Application Form](#). For prospective candidates, this must be uploaded as part of the application for admission. For current HDR candidates, applications must be submitted to graduate-research@newcastle.edu.au by no later than AEST 11.59pm 30 November 2026.
- (14) Only complete applications will be considered and the onus is on the applicant to provide the documentation outlined.

Section 6 – Selection Process

- (15) Each application will be assessed by the relevant College to determine whether the research proposal aligns with one or more of the University's nine [Research Priorities](#). If determined to be aligned, the application will then be scored as outlined below. If unaligned, the application will be deemed ineligible.

Component	Maximum Points
First Class Honours (7)/ Second Class Division I Honours (5)	7
GPA converted to a score	7
Publications	4
Research Excellence/Research Priority Alignment	7
Maximum Total Score	25

- (16) College Assessment Committees will determine the following scholarship score components for each eligible application:
- Research Excellence/Research Priority Alignment component score for each eligible application with a maximum 7 points awarded on the basis of the applicant's application and responses in the Australian Government Research Training Program – Academic Career Pathway – Scholarship Application Form.
 - Publication component score with a maximum 4 points, taking into consideration the publication type, publication quality, and the extent of the applicant's contribution to each publication.

Publication Type	Score
Refereed/peer reviewed journal article, book, book chapter, academic conference proceedings, research exhibition (with written exhibition guide), creative work. Must be published or accepted for publication (in press) with verifiable evidence. Manuscripts under preparation or under review will not be scored.	Up to 4 points

- (17) Graduate Research will determine the following scholarship score components for each eligible application:

- a. Grade Point Average (GPA), with a maximum 7 points, will be assessed as follows:
The GPA used for scholarship assessment will be based on the applicant's most recent completed qualification which equates to a minimum Australian Qualifications Framework Level 7. Graduate Research scales the score with reference to the University's scoring system or the country where the qualification was attained so that each applicant is given a GPA out of 7. Where an applicant's highest qualification does not equate to a minimum of an Australian Qualifications Framework Bachelor degree, the applicant will be awarded a set GPA score of 0 out of 7; and
- b. First Class Honours will be awarded 7 points and Second Class Division I Honours will be awarded 5 points degree from the University, or an equivalent University award within the last two years.

(18) Final applicant scores will be compiled and ranked in order of numerical merit. Based on available funding, the Dean of Graduate Research will determine the scholarship cut-off for each College and approve the final allocation of RTP scholarships and University medallist scholarship top ups.

(19) Outcomes will be issued to successful applicants from 1 February 2027.

Section 7 – Scholarship Award & Conditions

(20) Scholarship recipients must commence their PhD program by no later than 1 November 2027.

(21) Scholarship recipients will be required to undertake the Academic Career Preparation (ACP) pathway as a component of their program and make satisfactory progress. Upon commencement in the degree program, progress in the ACP pathway will be assessed on an annual basis.

(22) Scholarship recipients are required to undertake their studies 'on campus', however candidates may apply for study at other locations to undertake activities such as fieldwork.

(23) Scholarship recipients are required to remain enrolled full time in their research degree, unless approval is granted by the Dean of Graduate Research to enrol part time due to specific carer requirements or medical conditions.

(24) Scholarship recipients must not undertake paid employment of more than sixteen hours per week, Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

(25) The conditions outlined in the University's [Research Training Program Scholarship Policy](#) and these Guidelines will apply to these scholarships.

(26) The Scholarship will consist of a 3.5 years Stipend (equivalent to the Research Training Program Stipend base rate), up to 3.5 years Tuition Fees, and in accordance with the Research Training Program Scholarship Policy, and where appropriate a relocation reimbursement of up to \$1,500.

(27) Scholarship recipients who are selected for the University Medallist Scholarship Top Up will

receive an additional \$10,000 per annum for up to 3.5 years paid on a fortnightly basis.

Section 8 – Academic Career Preparation Pathway

(28) The ACP pathway associated with this scholarship scheme provides candidates with the opportunity for an academic training experience beyond the research experience. Scholarship recipients will gain a range of experiences working closely alongside their academic mentor as an integral part of the University's multifaceted and holistic approach to learning and teaching. This enables candidates to develop a portfolio of academic experiences, including core competencies in university teaching. Specifically, depending on subject expertise, the ACP pathway may include but are not limited to, opportunities to engage in:

- a. learning and practice based opportunities in conducting tutorials;
- b. lab demonstrations;
- c. learning and assessment design, and;
- d. the use of transformative technologies.

(29) Scholarship recipients will be required to complete the ACP pathway, which may include opportunities to engage in work integrated learning of no less than 50 hours in each of Years 2 and 3 (100 hours total). Upon commencement in the program, candidates' progress in the ACP pathway will be assessed on an annual basis.

Section 9 – Timeline

Applications close	30 November 2026
Outcomes issued by	Week of 1 February 2027
Must commence by	1 March 2027

Section 10 – Confidentiality

(30) The deliberations and decisions of colleges, committees and/or delegated officers relating to allocation, selection and award of scholarships are confidential.

Section 11 – Appeals

(31) Unsuccessful applicants for research scholarships may lodge an appeal against the outcome. Appeals will only be considered on issues of administrative process, not against

academic evaluations of the College or any committee in relation to the scoring process.

- (32) The appeal must be in writing, include a concise statement of the reasons for the appeal, and be lodged with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) (DVCRI@newcastle.edu.au), within 25 working days of the date of the letter advising the outcome of the application for the scholarship.
- (33) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) 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 the Research Training Program Scholarships – Academic Career Pathway Guidelines.
- (34) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will determine the outcome of the appeal as either:
- the administrative procedures for scholarship selection were applied correctly, and the application is unsuccessful;
 - 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
 - the administrative procedures for scholarship selection were not applied correctly, and a scholarship will be awarded.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	30 September 2026
Approval Authority	Dean of Graduate Research
Approval Date	
Expiry Date	30 March 2027
Enquiries Contact	Ms Rebecca Moore, Manager of Operational Compliance and Admissions