1. **Context/Overview**

These Guidelines support the University’s commitment to funding PhD and Research Master 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 Education (previously known as the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Changes, Science, Research and Tertiary Education);

**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 2016 round a current/recent honours student will be one who was enrolled in an honours program in 2015 or 2014. In addition, recipients of a University Medal (from any Australian University) will be considered a Current Honours Student if they completed honours in 2013 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’;

**DVC(R&I)** means Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
HDR means Higher Degree Research, a term widely used across the sector that is equivalent to a Research Higher Degree, PhD, Research Masters 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 and Innovation Division. Available to high achieving, current UON honours students;

IPRS means International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (previously known as Endeavour IPRS) funded by the Department of Education. 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;

PhD and Research Masters also known as RHD means Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

Provisional University of Newcastle Research Scholarship (PUNRSC) means Provisional University of Newcastle Research Scholarship which is offered as part of an Honours Scholarship package to current honours students and is conditional upon achieving Honours 1 and being offered admission into a PhD or Research Master Degree. Successful students may be awarded an APA or UNRSC50:50 depending on their position on the final ranking list;

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);

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 UNRSC50:50. The living allowance scholarship may be in the form of a UNRSC25:75, UNRSC50:50 or UNRSE;

UNRSC25:75 means University of Newcastle Research Scholarship – Central 25:75; a stipend funded 25% by the Research and Innovation Division and the remaining 75% by a Research Grant, School or Faculty;

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

UNRSC means University of Newcastle Research Scholarship – Central a stipend funded by the Research and Innovation Division.
3. **Selection Criteria**

The research scholarship selection criteria for applicants are listed in the PhD and Research Master 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 PhD or Research Master degree to be eligible for the offer of award of a research scholarship. In addition, to be considered for an IPRS, UNIPRS, APA, UNRSC25:75, UNRSC50:50 or UNRSC scholarship the University requires that all applicants satisfy three fundamental criteria;

1. 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 to section 9 of the PhD and Research Master Degree Scholarship Procedures);
2. Students must have a minimum GPA of 5.25 out of 7;
3. Students must hold an Honours Class One or equivalent qualification;

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 PhD or Research Master 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, 2016.

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 excerpt 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 excerpt from the Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2012 provides specific eligibility requirements for an IPRS;
5. **Allocation of Scholarships**

Up to 50 (subject to budget approval) equivalent full centrally funded scholarships will be available as UNRSC25:75 or UNRSC50:50 scholarships. In the unlikely event that funding remains after all eligible split scholarships are offered, full UNRSC scholarships may be offered.

### 5.1. Early Round Offers

#### 5.1.1. Commonwealth Funded Scholarships

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### 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.
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 2015 UNRSC25:75 or 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 according to the institution merit lists and necessarily in areas of research strength. The exact number of these is normally advised by the Department of Education 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 centrally funded scholarships (UNRSC25:75, UNRSC50:50 and UNRSC) less any already allocated outside of the round, will remain for allocation between international and domestic candidates. Faculties nominate suitable candidates from the scholarship pool for UNIPRS and UNRSC25:75 and UNRSC50:50 scholarships based on the funding availability in the Faculty, School or research grant 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 the Department of Education confirm actual APA numbers in mid-December. This figure allows for a number of expected declines. UNRSC25:75 and 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. Centrally Funded Scholarship Top-Ups

5.2.3.1. 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.

5.2.3.2. 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 Scholarship Ranking Committee to allocate one APA to an exceptional domestic student who for some reason does not fit the formula driven calculation. The flexibility may take into account quality of publications and ranking of previous 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 PhD or Research Master 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 UNRSC25:75, UNRSC50:50’s and UNRSC’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;
• UNIPRS’s 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 PhD and Research Master Degree Scholarships Guidelines and PhD and Research Master Degree Scholarships Procedures.

The outcome of the review will be reported to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), 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 working 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 PhD and Research Master 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**

PhD and Research Master Degree Scholarship Procedures

15. **Related Documents**

English Proficiency Relaxation Request Form

English Proficiency Policy

Alternate Grade Point Average and Honours Class One Equivalence Form

UNRSC50:50 Scholarship Nomination Form

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**ADDITIONAL DATA REQUIRED**

**Key Words**

Research Higher Degree
PhD

Research Master 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**