1. **Context**

These procedures support the administration and allocation of Main Round PhD and Research Masters Degree Scholarships in accordance with the NeW Directions focus on attracting high calibre research 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 Change, 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 emerging areas of research strength and other research areas, 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 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 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 Degree** also known as **RHD** means Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

Provisional University of Newcastle Research Scholarship (**PUNRSC**) 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 Masters 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 UNRSC5050. 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. **Role of Office of Graduate Studies (OGS)**

The Office of Graduate Studies will:

- receive applications from international and domestic applicants
- triage and undertake preliminary admission processing for complete applications
- evaluate overseas credentials using UK NARIC and/or NOOSR
- complete eligibility checks
- Scale the GPAs where relevant
- complete the scholarship assessment form for eligible applicants who have gone through the hurdle system
- distribute and receive application packages to and from Faculties
- issue letters of offer of admission to candidates
- issue offer of scholarship letters
- Organise the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) with scholarship candidates given priority
- receive scholarship acceptances and declines
- re-offer scholarships according to the reserve list
- commence scholarship payments

3.1. **Reports and Compliance**

OGS will provide lists to ADRT’s of eligible main round applicants including those who can be nominated for UNRSC25:75 and UNRSC50:50 scholarships. Lists of ineligible applicants and the reason for ineligibility can also be provided as needed. OGS will also have responsibility for ensuring the University’s compliance with Department of Industry requirements and Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2012.

4. **Role of Faculties**

4.1. **DVCR&I Honours Scholarships with Provisional University of Newcastle Research Scholarship (PUNRSC)**

Subject to budget availability and DVCR&I approval, faculties will call for applications, assess, rank and advise OGS of recommended recipients of the Research and Innovation Division Honours Scholarships of $1,000 with automatic PUNRSC. Recipients must be currently enrolled in an Honours program at the University of Newcastle, have a strong GPA, be likely to achieve Honours Class One plus intend to commence a PhD or Research Masters degree the following year.
4.2. Main Round Scholarships

4.2.1. Confirm Assessment Score

Faculties have responsibility for confirming the preliminary scholarship assessment score or recommending an alternate score with justification during the scholarship round and as per the timeline.

Supervisors, Schools and Faculties have responsibility for submitting English relaxation requests, alternate GPA requests and honours equivalence requests with appropriate evidence and explanation.

4.2.2. Provide UNRSC25:75 and UNRSC50:50 nominations

Faculties will also nominate eligible international and domestic applicants for a UNRSC25:75 or UNRSC50:50 living allowance scholarship with confirmed funding using the 2015 UNRSC25:75 or UNRSC50:50 Scholarship Nomination form with matching UNIPRS if relevant.

5. Role of the Scholarship Ranking Committee

The Scholarship Ranking Committee will be chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies and will:

- Resolve discrepancies in scoring or equivalence matters and consider unusual circumstances where applicable
- Determine whether an award is to be an IPRS, UNIPRS, APA, UNRSC25:75, UNRSC50:50 or UNRSC
- Identify reserves for second round offers from January
- Make recommendation to the DVC(R&I) accordingly

6. Triage and Assessment Process

Scholarship triage and credential evaluation will be carried out in OGS prior to the progressive dispatch of applications to Faculties for assessment. Scholarship assessment forms must be approved by the Heads of Schools and Faculty ADRTs to provide a consistent, structured assessment on the basis of evidenced qualifications, experience and accomplishments presented in the application, relative to opportunity (refer definitions). Faculties will return approved, scholarship assessed applications to OGS according to the timeline. The final scholarship score will be subject to approval by the Dean, Graduate Studies and the Scholarship Ranking Committee.
7. **Selection Criteria – Hurdle System**

Due to the volume of applications received in comparison to the number of government and Research and Innovation Division scholarships available and to recognise government scholarship eligibility criteria, applications will be assessed using the following hurdle system:

7.1. **Closing Date – Hurdle 1**

Applications not received by 31 August (international) or 31 October (domestic) will be deemed ineligible. All applications must be complete by the closing date. Supporting documentation received after the closing date will not normally be considered.

7.2. **Triage Process**

Applications that do not show an identified a potential supervisor and that are categorised as a previous honours student applicant i.e. not currently enrolled in honours or completed honours last year and have a triage score of less than 12 will be deemed uncompetitive for scholarship and sent an unsuccessful scholarship outcome. In their letter, they will be asked whether or not they wish to be assessed for admission as a self-funded student and will be given two weeks to respond. All applications deemed uncompetitive for scholarship will remain accessible to Faculties.

7.3. **English Proficiency – Hurdle 2**

Applications (international and domestic) who have not demonstrated meeting UoN English requirements by the closing date will be deemed ineligible and not assessed for scholarship. Supervisors and Schools can make a case for relaxation of the English requirement or to be included in the scholarship round if warranted using the English relaxation request form. Relaxation requests will be scrutinised and evidence must be provided that a Skype conversation, or similar, has been held to assess English speaking, listening and comprehension skills.

7.4. **Grade Point Average (GPA) Calculations – Hurdle 3**

The GPA used for scholarship assessment for both domestic and international candidates will be taken directly from the GPA stated on the applicant’s Bachelor transcript. The Office of Graduate Studies will scale the score with reference to the University’s scoring system where readily available so that each applicant is given a GPA out of 7. Applications that do not achieve a minimum scaled GPA of 5.25 out of 7 will be deemed ineligible and not assessed for scholarship.

In exceptional circumstances, if the GPA is less than 5.25 out of 7, and the proposed supervisor and Head of School consider that this is not appropriate for a particular candidate, a case can be made to the Chair of the Scholarship Ranking Committee for the minimum 5.25 out of 7 GPA score to be used for eligibility and scoring purposes. This proposal and justification should be submitted using the Alternate Scholarship GPA Score Form to the Senior Graduate Studies
If an applicant has two Bachelor degrees, the most relevant rather than the most recent degree is used. Any applicant without a Bachelor degree will be deemed ineligible. The School has the responsibility for proposing an alternate GPA if appropriate which will then be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Dean of Graduate Studies or the Scholarship Ranking Committee.

7.4.1. Research Masters Degree in relation to GPA calculations.

Despite the Research Masters Degree being the more recent academic study, only Bachelor degrees are used for the GPA component of the scholarship score for equity and accurate comparison purposes. Research Masters Degree study is recognised in the scholarship assessment score as extra research attainments, only where there is a significant research component.

7.5. Honours Class One or Equivalent – Hurdle 4

Applications that do not demonstrate any possible way of meeting Honours Class One equivalence e.g. have a low GPA and have no additional research attainments will be deemed ineligible and not assessed for scholarship as there are always excess numbers of applicants who are Honours 1 equivalent. These applications will be sent to the Faculty for assessment for admission only and given lower administrative priority than a complete scholarship application; in exceptional circumstances the Faculty may propose that a full scholarship assessment be conducted. Determination as to whether to proceed with a full assessment is at the discretion of the Dean of Graduate Studies based on the justification provided for the assessment and whether a UNRSC25:75 or UNRSC50:50 scholarship nomination form has been provided.

7.6. Remaining Eligible Applicants

All remaining applicants will have a full scholarship assessment. Scholarship assessment forms will be pre-filled by OGS using information evidenced in the application package and will indicate whether the candidate is being assessed as a current/recent honours student or other (previous) honours student. In the unlikely event that two applications are equally ranked (to three decimal places) for the last available scholarship, preference will be directed to a PhD applicant over a Research Masters Degree applicant.

7.7. Ineligible Applicants

Where applicants have made contact with a potential supervisor prior to applying and have identified this on their application form but are deemed ineligible according to the above hurdle system, the application package will be emailed to the listed supervisor/s to provide them with the opportunity to propose an English relaxation request or an Alternate Grade Point Average Calculation or Honour Class One Relaxation proposal. Relaxations must be detailed, evidence
based and supported by the Head of School and Assistant Dean Research Training for consideration by the Chair of the Scholarship Ranking Committee.

A list of all ineligible applicants will be sent to Faculty ADRT’s as soon as possible after the closing date.

8. **Scholarship Score Components**

The scoring mechanism for the round will be:

i. **International Current**
   GPA converted to a score out of 17
   Publications out of 1.5
   Experience out of 1.5

ii. **International Other**
   GPA converted to a score out of 8
   Publications out of 6
   Experience out of 6

iii. **Domestic Current**
   GPA converted to a score out of 17
   Publications out of 1.5
   Experience out of 1.5

iv. **Domestic Other**
   GPA converted to a score out of 12
   Publications out of 4
   Experience out of 4

For international applicants, if the School indicates that an eligible applicant’s research topic is in an area of research strength and the total scholarship score is above 16 out of 20, the application will be considered for IPRS (previously known as EIPRS).

8.1. **Publications**

Scoring of publications and exhibitions will be as follows:

- International refereed journal article – 2 marks each
- National refereed journal article – 1 mark each
- Conference publication – 1 mark each (max 3)
- Research exhibition – 1 mark each

The scoring system described only applies to publications for which the applicant is first author. Half the points described above will be allocated for publications for which the applicant is only a contributing, rather than lead, author. For instance, an international publication for which the applicant was third author will attract 1 mark. Students may be awarded a total of 3 points for publication for which they were not first author. For instance, a student who was a contributing
author on 8 publications may only receive 3 marks; the student may though receive further marks for other publications for which they were lead author.

Where a discipline has a different publication authorship model (e.g. alphabetical), a case may be made by the supervisor with approval of the Head of School and ADRT to the Dean of Graduate Studies outlining the model as justification for full points. Such cases will be confirmed and then kept as a reference for future publication scoring by OGS.

8.2. Research Experience

Scoring of research experience will be as follows:

- Research Masters Degree – 6 marks each
- Coursework master degree with 20% thesis component – 3 marks each
- Coursework master degree with less than 20% thesis component including those with no research component – 0.5 marks each
- Research work experience years – 1 mark per full-time year (max 3)

9. English Proficiency

The University of Newcastle normally requires that the award of an IPRS will only be made to eligible international applicants who have met English Language requirements by the closing date for submission of scholarship applications. In exceptional circumstances the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) or the President of Academic Senate may waive the English language requirements for an applicant for a PhD or Research Masters Degree, on the recommendation of the appropriate Head of School, where:

i. the applicant has been working in, or has been closely associated with the School for, a period of at least six months; and

ii. the supervisor provides evidence that the applicant’s oral and written command of English is sufficient to allow completion of the candidature in the normal time.

In exceptional circumstances a case can be made to the Dean of Graduate Studies to allow an application to be considered for scholarship despite not meeting the English requirement by the closing date. Requests of this nature should be submitted via the English Relaxation Request Form. Any scholarship offer would then be conditional upon meeting the English proficiency prior to commencement.

10. Honours Class One and Equivalence

Honours 1 or equivalent is the threshold for consideration for the award of a scholarship. Attainments and/or qualifications that provide the evidence for Honours 1 equivalence such as publications or a masters by research can also be given recognition in any other category. Honours 1 equivalence will be suggested by OGS where possible. If OGS cannot determine equivalence based on standard criteria, the proposed supervisor with approval from the Head of
School should indicate equivalence (whether equivalent or not) on the Honours Class One Equivalence Form which will be approved by the Assistant Dean (Research Training).

10.1. International qualifications

International qualifications will be assessed for comparability with Australian degrees on the basis of reference material from the National Office for Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) Guides, UK NARIC, the International Handbook of Universities and other available resources. These assessments will be undertaken by staff in OGS. A Distinction level GPA (6/7) for an international undergraduate qualification is assessed as equivalent to Honours 1, provided that the degree is of at least four years duration.

For clarity purposes, if an international student has undertaken honours at an Australian university then the honours result stands rather than a 6 out of 7 GPA.

10.2. Honours degree from an Australian university

Where the applicant has attended an Australian University, Honours 1 or an equivalent Honours 1 qualification is required. Those whose qualifications and experience are assessed as less than equivalent to Honours 1 will not be eligible for a scholarship except where all eligible Honours 1 applicants have received a scholarship and there are a number of scholarships remaining. In the unlikely event that this does occur Honours 2 Division 1 applications will be ranked and nominations accepted for UNRSC25:75 and UNRSC50:50 scholarships. APA's can only be awarded to candidates with Honours 1 or equivalent.

All candidates currently enrolled in Honours programs are eligible to be considered for a research scholarship and will be ranked as if they have achieved Honours 1. Any offers issued will be conditional on obtaining Honours 1. An Honours 2 will result in the withdrawal of the scholarship. If the applicant is deemed to have achieved the equivalent to Honours 1, the Head of School/ADRT must state the justification on the assessment sheet. Where equivalence remains uncertain, the Scholarship Ranking Committee will make a determination.

10.3. Other qualifications that may meet equivalence requirements

Some applicants will present with a Bachelor degree as well as other qualifications and research experience. For the purpose of the scholarship application process, an Australian Research Masters Degree or international equivalent is considered equal to Honours 1. Other standard Honours 1 equivalency measures include:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equivalence</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Publications</td>
<td>2 or more refereed publications, exhibitions, conference publications etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C/work Masters + 1 yr PhD or Res. Masters</td>
<td>Coursework Masters with min 20% thesis component plus 1 year satisfactory progress in a PhD or Research Masters</td>
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<tr>
<td>C/work Masters + 1 publication</td>
<td>Coursework Masters with min 20% thesis component plus one published refereed paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/work Masters + 2 yrs exp</td>
<td>Coursework Masters with min 20% thesis component plus 2 years full time equivalent research work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA 6/7</td>
<td>For International Applicants only who did their Bachelor degree overseas, a Grade Point Average of 6 out of 7 or higher in a four year undergraduate degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masters by Research</td>
<td>Master of Philosophy or any other Master’s program predominantly by research</td>
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<tr>
<td>C/work Masters with Outstanding Thesis</td>
<td>Coursework Masters with min 1 semester full-time equivalent research project for which the student achieved a HD (or equivalent grade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Detail to be provided by the proposed supervisor and confirmed by HOS and ADRT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Honours Class 1 Equiv.</td>
<td>Will not be eligible for a scholarship unless there are scholarships remaining and all candidates with H1 have a scholarship offer.</td>
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</table>

11. Externally Funded Scholarships (UNRS – External)

At any time of year applicants who are nominated by the Faculty for a UNIPRS with UNRSE will be considered by the Dean of Graduate Studies and DVC (R&I) Research. Award of UNIPRS is subject to meeting appropriate academic standards, normally Honours 1 and a GPA of at least 5.25 out of 7, as well as satisfying the University’s English proficiency policy. Applications of quality unsuccessful candidates for a main round research scholarship will be made available to interested University staff seeking to award a scholarship funded by a research grant or other external funding source.

12. 2015 Main Research Scholarship Round Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid August</td>
<td>University wide Honours Information Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 31 August 11:59 pm</td>
<td>INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS CLOSE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 2 October</td>
<td>All International applications to be pre-assessed for admission and scholarship and despatched to faculties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 30 October</td>
<td>All International applications to be returned from faculties to OGS for outcome letters (9 working days from receipt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 31 October 11:59 pm</td>
<td><strong>DOMESTIC APPLICATION CLOSE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 16 November</td>
<td>All Domestic applications to have been despatched to faculties with scholarship</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pre-assessment completed (11 working days).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 25 November</td>
<td>International ranking meeting 2:00 pm – Atrium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 30 November</td>
<td>All domestic applications to have been returned to OGS from faculties (10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>working days).</td>
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<td>Automatic APA’s offered on a rolling basis.</td>
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<td>ADRTs/Faculties to advise OGS of all final international and domestic UNRSC25:75</td>
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<td>and UNRSC50:50 scholarship nominations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 7 December</td>
<td>Domestic ranking meeting 9:00 am – Committee Room (TBC)</td>
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<td>IPRS scholarship offer letters despatched (6 or 7 may be offered prior to</td>
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<td>receiving Department of Education advice).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-automatic APA offer letters progressively despatched.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UNRSC25:75 and UNRSC50:50 offer letters despatched progressively.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remaining unsuccessful international letters to be despatched</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remaining unsuccessful domestic letters to be despatched</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>Subsequent International and Domestic offers to be made on rolling basis</td>
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<td>including reserves</td>
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### 13. Essential Supporting Documents

PhD and Research Masters Degree Scholarship Guidelines

### 14. Related Documents

English Proficiency Policy

Alternate Grade Point Average and Honours Class One Equivalence Form

English Relaxation Request Form

UNRSC50:50 Scholarship Nomination Form

UNRSC25:75 Scholarship Nomination Form
**ADDITIONAL DATA REQUIRED**

**Key Words**

List 6 keywords that appear in the document and reflect the subject.

Research Higher Degree, RHD, Scholarship, Procedure, PhD, Research Masters, Research Degree

**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