

GUIDELINES

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM (RTP) SCHOLARSHIPS – STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT SCHEME

Section 1 – Audience

- (1) These guidelines apply to University of Newcastle (University) academics and domestic HDR applicants intending to participate in the **Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarships – Strategic Engagement 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 allocation of Strategic Engagement Scholarships is determined on the basis of students undertaking research in line with the University's research themes.
- (4) Scholarship recipients will be admitted to a Doctoral Degree with the Industry Engaged PhD pathway included as a component of the program.
- (5) This document should be read in conjunction with the [Research Training Program Scholarship Policy](#)

Section 3 – Definitions

AQF 7 or above means an Australian Qualification Framework Level 7 qualification – Bachelor degree or above.

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.

HDR means Higher Degree by Research Program for example, a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

Priority applicants are those who have received a First Class or Second Class Division I Honours degree from the University, or an equivalent University award as determined by the relevant School or College, within the last two years. These applications will be prioritised in the selection process.

RTP means the Australian Government Research Training Program scholarships.

University means the University of Newcastle.

Section 4 – Eligibility

- (6) Applications will be considered for current and prospective domestic HDR candidates only. Current candidates may be no further into their program than 18 months.
- (7) Applicants must be able to commence their HDR program by the specified date. Applicants who are unable to commence by this date should apply in a future scholarship round.
- (8) Applicants must satisfy the fundamental admission assessment criteria:
 - a. Applicants must meet the [admissions criteria](#) for entry into the HDR program; and
 - b. Applicants must have support from a supervisor who is a member of the University's academic staff.

Section 5 – Application Process

- (9) Applicants must submit a formal online application for entry into an HDR program and attach the [Australian Government Research Training Program – Strategic Engagement Scheme Application Form \(prospective candidates\)](#). The aforementioned application form constitutes the scholarship application.
- (10) Current candidates must submit the [Australian Government Research Training Program – Strategic Engagement Scheme Application Form \(current candidates\)](#) by email to graduate-research@newcastle.edu.au. The aforementioned application form constitutes the scholarship application. The application must be supported by the student's supervisor and is subject to a competitive awards process.
- (11) Only complete applications will be considered and the onus is on the applicant to provide the documentation outlined.
- (12) Applicants must submit their formal online application for admission and scholarship by no later than AEST 11.59pm on the last date of each month to be considered in the respective monthly scholarship rounds.
- (13) All applicants will receive their outcomes and commence by no later than the following dates to be considered in the respective scholarship rounds:

	Submission Due Date	Outcomes Released	Commencement Date
1	31 January 2025	28 February 2025	7 April 2025
2	28 February 2025	31 March 2025	5 May 2025
3	31 March 2025	30 April 2025	2 June 2025
4	30 April 2025	30 May 2025	7 July 2025
5	30 May 2025	30 June 2025	4 August 2025
6	30 June 2025	31 July 2025	1 September 2025
7	31 July 2025	29 August 2025	6 October 2025
8	29 August 2025	30 September 2025	3 November 2025
9	30 September 2025	31 October 2025	1 December 2025
10	31 October 2025	29 November 2025	2 February 2026
11	30 November 2025	16 January 2026	2 March 2026

Section 6 – Selection Process

- (14) Each application will first be assessed by the relevant College Assessment Committee to confirm that the research proposal aligns with one or more of the University's nine research priorities. If confirmed, the application will then be scored as outlined below:

Component	Max. points
First Class Honours (7)/Second Class Division I Honours (5)	7
Research Excellence/Industry Engagement	7
GPA	7
Publications	4
Maximum Total Score	25

- (15) College Assessment Committees will determine the following scholarship score components for each eligible application:
- Research Excellence/Industry Engagement (maximum 7 points awarded on the basis of an applicant's responses in the Australian Government Research Training Program – Strategic Engagement Scheme Application Form).
- (16) Graduate Research will determine the following scholarship score components for each eligible application:
- Grade Point Average (GPA) (maximum 7 points) 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. Identify any applicants who have received a First Class Honours (7 points) or Second Class Division I Honours (5 points) degree from the University, or an equivalent University award within the last two years.
- c. Publications (maximum 4 points) as outlined in the following table:

Publication Type	Score
Refereed/peer reviewed journal article, book, book chapter, 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.	2 points each

- (17) Final applicant scores will be compiled and ranked in order of numerical merit. The cut-off for successful scholarship recipients for each College will be determined in line with funding available by the Dean of Graduate Research, who will determine the final award of RTP scholarships.
- (18) Outcomes will be issued to successful applicants by the dates within Section 5 (13) for the applicable scholarship round.

Section 7 – Scholarship Award and Conditions

- (19) Successful applicants must commence their HDR program by no later than the dates within Section 5 (13) for the applicable scholarship round.
- (20) Successful applicants will be required to undertake the [Industry Engaged PhD pathway](#), which includes an internship with a research end-user at a minimum of 3 months, agreed within the first 18 months of candidature (see Section 8).
- (21) Scholarship recipients will not be permitted to enrol in coursework during their enrolment as a PhD candidate but, subject to approval, may be permitted to audit coursework.
- (22) Scholarship recipients are required to undertake their studies 'on campus'. However, candidates may apply to study at other locations to undertake activities such as fieldwork, if approved.
- (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 extenuating circumstances.

- (24) The conditions outlined in the University's [Research Training Program Scholarship Policy](#) and these Guidelines will apply to these scholarships.
- (25) The Scholarship will consist of a 3.5 years Stipend (2025 rate of \$37,440), Tuition Fees, and in accordance with the Research Training Program Scholarship Policy, and where appropriate a relocation reimbursement of up to \$1,500.

Section 8 – Industry Engaged PhD Pathway

- (26) The [Industry Engaged PhD](#) associated with this scholarship scheme provides candidates with an industry training experience beyond the research experience. Scholarship recipients will build career readiness across all industry settings through participation in flexible learning opportunities, industry engagement activities and experience in academic and non-academic environments. Specifically, the pathway includes the following components:
 - a. **Online professional skills development modules** including in project management, communication, networking and translating ideas into impact;
 - b. **Career mentorship** to provide guidance on impact and advice about industry skills development, networking, and job-ready candidates;
 - c. **Industry internship** with a [research end-user](#) at a minimum of 3 months, agreed within the first 18 months of candidature; and
 - d. **Full day masterclasses**, held biannually, to provide intensive opportunities to hone a range of flexible and transferable professional skills.

Section 9 – Confidentiality

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

Section 10 – Appeals

- (28) 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.
- (29) The appeal must be in writing by the applicant, 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.

- (30) 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 – Strategic Engagement Scheme Guidelines.
- (31) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will determine the outcome of the appeal as either:
- c. the administrative procedures for scholarship selection were applied correctly, and the application is unsuccessful;
 - d. 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
 - e. the administrative procedures for scholarship selection were not applied correctly, and a scholarship will be awarded.

Status and Details

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