Higher Degree by Research Scholarship Policy

Section 1 - Audience

(1) This policy applies to University of Newcastle (University) funded Higher Degree by Research (HDR) scholarship recipients, excluding Research Training Program scholarships covered under the Research Training Program Scholarship Policy.

Section 2 - Executive Summary

(2) The University offers a wide range of scholarships to support PhD and Research Masters candidates with a proven capacity for research.

(3) This policy supports the University's commitment to recruiting and funding higher degrees by research through the provision of living allowance and tuition fee scholarships.

(4) This policy provides a comprehensive referral point for University-funded HDR scholarships.

Section 3 - Relaxation Clause

(5) To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any case, the Director, Graduate Research may relax any provision of this Policy provided that the relaxation:

a. does not compromise compliance with external obligations (including but not limited to contractual, legislative or accreditation requirements);
b. does not override a decision made under a formal delegation of authority;
c. does not replace a decision that is subject to a formal delegation of authority; and
d. gives due consideration to the principles of procedural fairness.

(6) The exercise of a relaxing provision in the context of this document must be undertaken in consultation with the partner institution/donor/industry partner if applicable. In the context of this document, a partner institution is the other university (alongside the University) where a Dual Award or Jointly Awarded candidate will undertake part of their studies.

Section 4 - Scholarship types

(7) This scholarship policy applies to all scholarship listed on the HDR Scholarships List.

Section 5 - Eligibility

Tuition

(8) Applicants to an approved Masters Degree (Research) or Doctoral Degree (Research) at the University may apply for a scholarship where:

a. the applicant is not already receiving a scholarship which includes course tuition; and
b. for international applicants, the applicant is:
    i. enrolled as a full-time candidate and is compliant with international student visa requirements as specified by Department of Home Affairs (DOHA).

(9) Specific eligibility:

a. UNIPRS: An applicant must be an international candidate. UNIPRS scholars must also be awarded a living allowance scholarship and subject to funding source, Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) and equivalent benefits to a UNRSC. The living allowance scholarship may be in the form of a UNRSC or UNRSE.
b. CSC: Subject to availability of sponsor funding, an applicant must hold a living allowance scholarship awarded by the CSC, and be commencing a HDR program in an area of research concentration as identified by the CSC or the University, and have met the University's English proficiency requirements.
c. Vietnam Government PhD Scholarship (Project 89): Subject to availability of sponsor funding, an applicant must be a citizen of Vietnam, and nominated for a Vietnam Government PhD Scholarship (Project 89). The scholar must remain an international candidate throughout their candidature at the University.

Stipend

(10) Applicants to an approved Masters Degree (Research) or Doctoral Degree (Research) at the University may apply for a scholarship where:

a. they are enrolling as a full-time candidate or have approval to undertake part-time study;
b. they will be enrolled on campus and will remain enrolled on campus for the majority of the degree (also refer to Section 19 Research internships); and
c. for international applicants, they are enrolling as a full-time candidate and are compliant with international student visa requirements as specified by DOHA.

(11) Specific eligibility:

a. Donor funded and Business and Industry: The applicant may be nominated for a scholarship by, or in consultation with, the Donor/Industry partner. The scholar must also remain enrolled on campus or at the Business and Industry Partner's facilities for the majority of the degree.
b. Vietnam Government PhD Scholarship (Project 89): Subject to availability of sponsor funding, an applicant must be a citizen of Vietnam, and nominated for a Vietnam Government PhD Scholarship (Project 89). The scholar must remain an international candidate throughout their candidature at the University.
c. DADD and JADD: Subject to an executed Candidate Agreement between the University and the partner institution, which sets out the arrangements agreed upon by both institutions and the individual doctoral candidate undertaking a Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD) or Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD).

Section 6 - Periods of support

(12) If a scholarship is awarded to a scholar already undertaking a HDR program, the period of support will be reduced acknowledging the scholar's prior tenure.

Tuition

(13) A full-time scholarship may be held for:

a. 1.75 years to support a full-time Masters Degree (Research), with a possible 3 month extension, subject to approval by the Director, Graduate Research; or
b. 3.5 years for a Doctoral Degree (Research) with a maximum of two possible 3 month extensions, each subject to approval by the Director, Graduate Research; or
c. Maximum of 1 year for a full-time Doctoral Degree (Research) by Prior Publication, with a maximum of two possible 3 month extensions, each subject to approval by the Director, Graduate Research.

Stipend

(14) A full-time scholarship may be held for a maximum of:

a. 1.75 years to support a Masters Degree (Research); or
b. a maximum of 3.5 years for a Doctoral Degree (Research).

Scholarship Extensions

(15) The eligibility and process for an extension will be included in the scholar's scholarship offer.

Section 7 - Rate

Stipend

(16) The rate applicable to each scholarship round is available on the Graduate Research website.

Section 8 - HDR Allowances

Relocation Allowance - domestic scholars

(17) Scholars from within Australia who relocate to within 50 kms of their campus of study will be eligible for a one-off relocation reimbursement of up to $1,500. Claimable expenses upon production of tax invoices/receipts include:

a. Travel to within 50 kms of their campus of study equivalent to the economy or student airfare, for the scholar, spouse and dependents;
b. Removalist expenses; and
c. A pre-determined per kilometre allowance if travelling by car, up to the equivalent economy/student airfare costs.

(18) Where a Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD) or Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD) scholar has not previously claimed a relocation allowance, they may receive a one-off relocation allowance of $1,500 to relocate to the partner institution.

(19) Scholars cannot claim for accommodation, meal costs, or direct petrol costs.

Relocation Allowance - international scholars

(20) International scholars receive a one-off relocation allowance of $1,500 to relocate to within 50 kms of their campus of study from an overseas country to take up their scholarship.

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

(21) OSHC is provided to Stipend international scholars for the duration of their student visa and any approved upgrade to the scholar's program. Where the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) is extended on the basis of an extension to candidature, the scholar will be liable for any additional OSHC costs. The scholar must advise Graduate Research of the departure date from Australia following thesis submission or award of degree. OSHC will cease at the award of your degree, or if a scholar withdraws or is terminated from their program of study.

(22) Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD) and Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD): OSHC will be ceased at the time of final departure from Australia or at award of degree, whichever is earlier.

(23) All scholars are eligible to receive a laptop computer for the duration of their candidature.

(24) All scholars are eligible to apply for the direct research cost allowances. Appropriate uses of this funding includes, but is not limited to conference registration, travel, publication expenses, laptop and software costs, training courses, specific expertise or facilities, internship costs, research training support, data collection and analysis costs, thesis proof-reading and editing, and consumables.

Section 9 - Applications, Selection Process and Offers

Applications

(25) The Application process is available on the Graduate Research PHD and Research Degrees Apply Now website.

Selection

(26) Vietnam Government PhD Scholarship (Project 89) and CSC: The Committee or its nominee(s) undertake selection on the recommendation of the funding body and relevant School, and in accordance with the agreed disciplines listed in the Memorandum of Understanding.

(27) Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD) and Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD): The award of a centrally funded scholarship is at the Director, Graduate Research's discretion.

(28) Business and Industry: Selection is undertaken by the Business and Industry Scholarship Selection Committee, which may include the Director, Graduate Research, the Deputy Head of School, the prospective supervisor, and a representative from the industry partner.

(29) All other Stipend and Tuition scholarships: The Selection process applicable to each scholarship round is available on the Graduate Research website.

Offers

(30) Successful applicants will receive an offer via email to the email address stipulated on their application form or existing University email account.

Section 10 - Commencement

(31) The scholar must be enrolled in a HDR and commence the scholarship no later than the date specified in the scholarship offer. The offer will be forfeited if this condition is not met, unless deferral has been approved in accordance with the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

Section 11 - Supervision and facilities

(32) The University's Code of Practice for Higher Degree by Research Candidature applies in relation to HDR supervision and facilities.

Section 12 - Attendance

Stipend – Full Time

(33) A scholar must undertake an approved Masters Degree (Research) or Doctoral Degree (Research) at the University upon commencement of the scholarship and enrol as a full-time candidate, unless the Director, Graduate Research has approved part-time study.

Stipend – Part Time

(34) The Director, Graduate Research may approve a part-time Stipend scholarship to a domestic candidate where the applicant is able to demonstrate:

a. Carer responsibilities for a pre-school aged child;
b. Carer responsibilities for school-aged children as a sole parent with limited access to outside support;
c. Carer responsibilities for an invalid or disabled spouse, child or parent; or
d. A medical condition that limits their capacity to undertake full-time study, supported by medical certification.

(35) The Australian Government ESOS Act specifies that international candidates with a Student Visa cannot study on a part-time basis in Australia and therefore will not be awarded a scholarship on a part-time basis, unless there are compelling or compassionate circumstances

(36) The Director, Graduate Research may approve part-time study under exceptional circumstances for scholars studying outside Australia.

(37) Business and Industry: Approval to undertake part time study is required from the Business and Industry Partner.

(38) Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD) and Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD): Approval to undertake part time study is required from both the University and the partner institution.

Section 13 - Leave

(39) All types of leave must be discussed with, and approved by, the relevant supervisor.

a. Business and Industry: Approval for leave is also required from the Business and Industry Partner.
b. Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD) and Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD): Approval for leave is required from both the University and the partner institution.

Stipend

Annual Leave

(40) Scholars are entitled to up to 20 working days paid annual leave each year calculated on a pro-rata basis within the period of the scholarship. This may be accrued over the tenure of the scholarship.

Sick Leave

(41) Stipend scholars are entitled to up to 10 working days paid sick leave each year calculated on a pro-rata basis within the period of the scholarship. This may be accrued over the tenure of the scholarship.

(42) Sick leave entitlements may also be used by scholars with family responsibilities, to care for sick children or relatives.

(43) For periods of illness lasting longer than 10 working days and where there is medical certification confirming the illness, scholars may receive up to a total of 60 working days paid sick leave in addition to the normal duration of the scholarship, depending on the source of scholarship funding.

(44) Applications for sick leave exceeding the 10 working days' provision must be accompanied by medical certification, and submitted to Graduate Research prior to the scholarship expiry date.

Parental Leave

(45) Stipend scholars who are primary carers may receive 20 weeks paid parental leave for childbirth or adoption occurring within the tenure of the scholarship, depending on the source of scholarship funding.

(46) Periods of paid parental leave are in addition to the normal duration of the scholarship.

(47) All applications for parental leave must be submitted to Graduate Research prior to the scholarship expiry date and accompanied by medical/adoption certification, and submitted within the tenure of the scholarship.

(48) Paid parental leave is not available within the first 12 months of the scholarship.

(49) Unpaid parental leave may be applied for as Leave of Absence under this policy.

Partner Leave

(50) Stipend scholars who are partners may receive up to 10 working days paid partner leave for a childbirth or adoption occurring within the tenure of the scholarship, depending on the source of scholarship funding. For the purposes of this clause “partner” means the partner of the primary carer, which includes a spouse or de facto.

(51) Paid partner leave must be taken during the three-week period prior to the expected birth or placement of the child, or up to six months after the actual birth or placement of the child.

(52) Periods of paid partner leave are in addition to the normal duration of the scholarship.

(53) All applications for parental leave must be submitted to Graduate Research prior to the scholarship expiry date and accompanied by medical/adoption certification and submitted within the tenure of the scholarship.

(54) Paid partner leave is not available within the first 12 months of a scholarship.

Family and Domestic Violence Leave

(55) Stipend scholars are entitled to up to 10 working days paid fmaily and domestic violence leave each year calculated on a pro-rata basis within the period of the scholarship.

Unused Leave

(56) Any unused leave will be forfeited when the scholarship is completed or terminated.

Leave Entitlements for Part-time Scholars

(57) A part-time Stipend scholar is expected to progress at half the rate of a full-time scholar and therefore receives approximately half of the leave entitlements listed above (where applicable) for each year of study.

Section 14 - Leave of Absence

(58) Periods of approved leave of absence will not be deducted from the overall scholarship tenure, with the exception of the Stipend for grant funded scholarship as per clause 65.

Tuition

(59) After 12 months' full time equivalent, a scholar may apply to the relevant Head of School or Deputy Head of School for a leave of absence of scholarship for a period of up to 12 months during the tenure of the scholarship.

(60) For Doctoral Degree (Research) scholars only: any leave of absence applications exceeding 12 months during the tenure of the scholarship can only be approved by the Director, Graduate Research where the scholar can demonstrate exceptional circumstances beyond the scholar's control. The maximum period of any further extension will be 12 months.

Stipend

(61) After 12 months' full time equivalent, a scholar may apply to the Director, Graduate Research for a leave of absence of scholarship for a period of up to 12 months during the tenure of the scholarship.

(62) The Director, Graduate Research will only approve any further leave of absence where the scholar can demonstrate exceptional circumstances beyond the scholar's control. The maximum period of any further extension will be 12 months.

(63) Business and Industry: Approval for leave of absence must also be sought from the Business and Industry partner.

(64) Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD) and Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD): Approval for leave is required from both the University and the partner Institution.

(65) Donor funded: The Donor, via Graduate Research, must be notified of any leave of absence.

(66) Grant Funded: Unless evidence of medical or compassionate grounds is provided, stipend payments will be relinquished for the period of leave of absence.

International Scholars

(67) Leave of absence from scholarship may only be approved where the scholar can demonstrate exceptional circumstances beyond the scholar's control. The University is required to report to the DOHA in all such cases.

Section 15 - Employment

Stipend

(68) Scholars must not undertake paid employment of more than 16 hours per week within the hours of 9:00 am to

5:00 pm, Monday to Friday, averaged over a 12 month period (52 weeks).

(69) Scholars are not required to undertake paid employment as a condition of the scholarship.

International Scholars

(70) A scholar with a student visa may not undertake employment that is inconsistent with the conditions of their visa.

Section 16 - Enrolment variations

Transfer of Program within the University

(71) A scholarship may be transferred to another program of study subject to:

a. the scholar receiving formal approval for entry to that program by the Director, Graduate Research; and
b. if transferring to another School or College, the funding being available in that School or College.
c. CSC, Vietnam Government PhD Scholarship (Project 89), Business and Industry, Donor funded and Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD) and Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD): Approval from the sponsor, Industry partner, Donor or partner institution is also required.
d. Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD) and Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD) and Business and Industry: Scholars must gain partner institution or Industry partner approval prior to applying for conversion.

(72) If the Director, Graduate Research approves a transfer of program between a Master's Degree (Research) and a Doctoral Degree (Research):

a. Tuition:
    i. A Masters Degree (Research) scholar may upgrade to a Doctoral Degree (Research) program during the tenure of the scholarship. The maximum tuition scholarship duration then becomes 3.5 years full-time equivalent, including previous tenure, with a maximum of two possible 3 month extensions, each subject to approval by the Director, Graduate Research;
    ii. A Doctoral Degree (Research) scholar may convert to a Masters Degree (Research) program during the tenure of the scholarship. The maximum Tuition scholarship duration then becomes 1.75 years full-time equivalent, including any previous tenure, with a possible 3 month extension, subject to approval by the Director, Graduate Research.
b. Stipend:
    i. A Masters Degree (Research) scholar may upgrade to a Doctoral Degree (Research) program during the tenure of the scholarship. The maximum stipend and allowances duration then becomes 3.5 years full-time equivalent including any previous tenure.
    ii. A Doctoral Degree (Research) scholar may convert to a Masters Degree (Research) program during the tenure of the scholarship. The maximum stipend and allowances duration then becomes 1.75 years full-time equivalent, including any previous tenure.

Variation of Study Load

(73) The Director, Graduate Research may approve a request to alter a scholar's study load on application.

(74) Where the variation of study load is approved, the remaining period of scholarship will be extended, or reduced on a pro rata basis.

Section 17 - Temporary cessation of stipend payments

Stipend

(75) Where a scholar does not comply with clauses 10(a), (b) and (c) or 66:

a. Stipend payments will be forfeited; and
b. The periods of study undertaken towards the degree during this time will be deducted from the maximum period of scholarship tenure.

Section 18 - Research internships

Stipend

(76) Scholars may undertake approved research internships at other organisations for a maximum of 12 months duration on a full-time equivalent basis (unless a case for exceptional circumstances can be made).

(77) To apply for an internship, scholars must complete the Notification of Internship Form and send it to graduate-research@newcastle.edu.au.

(78) Research internships at other organisations are subject to the approval of the scholar's principal supervisor, the Head of School, and the Director, Graduate Research.

(79) Scholar's stipend payments may continue for the duration of the research activities, if:

a. the scholar already holds a stipend;
b. the maximum duration of the academic program has not been reached; and
a. the thesis has not been submitted for examination.

(80) Scholars undertaking research activities at other institutions are not eligible to have their stipend scholarship extended beyond the maximum period of support.

(81) Business and Industry: The Business and Industry partner must also approve research at other institutions.

(82) Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD) and Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD): This clause does not apply. Periods of research at another organisation are stipulated in the relevant Candidate Agreement.

Section 19 - Suspension of Scholarship

(83) Suspension of scholarship payments may occur if:

a. Scholars do not enrol in their program of study by the census date for each semester;
b. The Director, Graduate Research finds the scholar has failed to observe any condition of the Higher Degree by Research Policy, the Code of Practice for Higher Degree by Research Candidature or any additional condition outlined in the scholar's scholarship offer, or;
c. The Director, Graduate Research believes on reasonable grounds that the scholar's study is affected by circumstances that prevent the scholar from pursuing the program.

Donor Funded and Business and Industry:

(84) Scholarship payments may be suspended if the required reports are not provided within the requested timeframes.

Section 20 - Termination

International scholars

(85) Scholarship benefits will be terminated if the scholar does not hold a valid student visa. It is the responsibility of international scholars to ensure they hold a valid student visa while in Australia.

Tuition

(86) A scholarship will terminate:

a. on the expiry of the period for which the scholarship was granted;
b. upon submission of the thesis or creative component for examination;
c. if the scholar ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in this policy;
d. if candidature is terminated for any reason;
e. upon the death or incapacity of the scholar; or
f. if the scholar sends written resignation or withdrawal from enrolment to Graduate Research.

(87) Once a scholarship is terminated, it cannot be re-activated unless re-enrolment is required.

Stipend

(88) A scholarship will terminate:

a. on the expiry of the period for which the scholarship was granted;
b. 14 calendar days after the submission of the thesis or where applicable, creative component for examination;
c. if the scholar ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in Section 7 of this policy, other than during a period in which the scholarship has been temporarily relinquished or during a period of approved leave;
d. if the Research Training Sub-Committee finds the scholar has failed to observe any condition of the Higher Degree by Research Policy, the Code of Practice for Higher Degree by Research Candidature or any additional condition outlined in the scholar's scholarship offer, in which event any monies paid to the scholar subsequent to that breach shall immediately become repayable to the University;
e. if candidature is terminated for any reason;
f. upon the death or incapacity of the scholar;
g. if the scholar sends written resignation or withdrawal from enrolment to Graduate Research;
h. if the scholar does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of Leave of Absence or does not obtain approval to extend that period of Leave of Absence;
i. when the scholar ceases to be a full-time scholar and when approval has not been obtained to hold the scholarship on a part-time basis; or
j. if the scholar fails to notify Graduate Research whilst in receipt of another benefit greater than 75% of the Stipend.

(89) Once a scholarship is terminated, it cannot be re-activated.

Section 21 - Obligations

(90) Scholars must accept the award of the scholarship subject to the conditions described in this policy and any additional conditions outlined in the scholar's scholarship offer, and agree to abide by the conditions and any subsequent variations to this policy.

(91) Scholars are required to conform to the rules and policies of the University governing their program.

(92) Donor funded: Scholars are required to provide additional reports to Graduate Research as requested.

Section 22 - Appeal

(93) Applicants and scholars may appeal in writing to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) against decisions made by the Director, Graduate Research or the Research Training Sub-Committee on the grounds of procedural deficiency.

(94) Written appeals can be submitted to Graduate Research within 20 working days of notification of a decision of the Director, Graduate Research. The determination by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) is final.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	4th February 2026
Review Date	4th November 2029
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	2nd February 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Rohan Walker Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Enquiries Contact	Graduate Research

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Working day" - Any day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a public holiday in Newcastle, on which business may be conducted.

"Applicant" - Where referring to a student, an applicant is an individual seeking entry to a program or course offered by the University or its partner organisation/s. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Award" - When referring to a University qualification, this term means an academic qualification approved by Academic Senate that is conferred when a student has met the relevant program requirements. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Calendar days" - All days in a month including weekends and public holidays.

"Campus" - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

"Candidature" - The period of time between acceptance of offer and termination, withdrawal from, or completion of a higher degree by research program, including periods when a candidate is not enrolled.

"Census date" - The date in each term on which a student / candidate enrolled in a course is deemed to be financially liable for the course.

"Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)" - Means the document issued through the Australian Government's relevant department and associated systems, by authorised officers of the University that confirms that an international student is eligible to enrol in a course. The CoE is required under Commonwealth Legislation for the student visa.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Candidate" - With regard to Higher Degree by Research it has the same meaning as student. For all other instances

it is a person considered for appointment to a position.

"Donor funded" - Includes any named benefactor or philanthropic scholarship.

"Dual Award Doctoral Degree (DADD)" - Is an arrangement whereby a doctoral degree candidate is jointly supervised by the University and another institution, is enrolled at both institutions, and receives two testamurs, each acknowledging the dual award. Each DADD candidature is governed by an individual Candidate Agreement.

"Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD)" - Is an arrangement whereby a doctoral degree candidate is jointly supervised by the University and another institution, is enrolled at both institutions and receives one award bearing the seals of both institutions. Each JADD candidature is governed by an individual Candidate Agreement and a JADD Agreement between the collaborating institutions.

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

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Thesis" - A dissertation involving research by a candidate for the award of a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) qualification.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.