

# Higher Degree Research Scholarships Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

- (1) This Policy establishes the University's selection principles and conditions for Higher Degree Research Scholarships.
- (2) This Policy applies to University Higher Degree Research Scholarship applicants and recipients.
- (3) This Policy relates to the University's Higher Degree Research Scholarships and is separate to those funded by the Australian Government.
- (4) The Australian Government's Research Training Program is addressed through the University's [Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarships Policy](#).

## Section 2 - Definitions

- (5) University Higher Degree Research Scholarship includes the following provided through the University:
  - a. Stipend Scholarship;
  - b. Fee Offset Scholarship;
  - c. Externally funded/co-funded scholarship; and/or
  - d. Top up scholarships for Indigenous Research Students recipients.

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

### Selection Policy

- (6) University application forms, selection and offer procedures and associated information will be available on the Graduate School website.
- (7) An applicant must be commencing or enrolled in a HDR program at the University.
- (8) The University will award scholarships in accordance with the criteria advertised on the Graduate School website, and with any other specific requirements for the respective scholarships being advertised. It may be that there are additional eligibility requirements or variations to the procedure for selection and award of certain scholarships. Such variations will be documented in the relevant scholarship scheme guidelines.
- (9) Scholarship applications will not be considered where the documentary evidence provided in the application is insufficient or incomplete.
- (10) A candidate will not be selected for a Higher Degree Research Scholarship unless the University is satisfied that the candidate meets, or will meet prior to the scholarship payment being made, the eligibility criteria for Higher Degree Research Scholarships, as well as the admission requirements stipulated in the rules of the respective program of study they are enrolling into.

(11) The University reserves the right to make offers for Higher Degree Research Scholarships out of round where candidates are deemed meritorious of an award.

(12) Candidates who are awarded a scholarship, but withdraw from their program of study, or whose enrolment is cancelled by the University for failure to maintain satisfactory progress or pay outstanding fees and charges, and later re-enter, will not be able to access their initial scholarship. They must re-apply for a Higher Degree Research Scholarship and if successful, will be paid only the balance of the initial scholarship.

(13) Candidates who are awarded a scholarship and defer or take leave of absence in accordance with the relevant rules and policies for their program of study, will have their scholarship held for the period of deferment or leave and may take up the scholarship on their return to study, subject to proof of continuing eligibility.

(14) Domestic and International Fee Offset Scholarships are determined by the University on the basis of advice from the Faculties and Colleges and the Graduate School and cover Masters by Thesis, Professional Doctorate and Doctor of Philosophy awards.

(15) Candidates who are awarded a scholarship are required to comply with all University policies, including those relating to satisfactory academic progress. The University will monitor academic performance and may terminate a Higher Degree Research Scholarship if a candidate is in breach of any of its policies or is identified as making unsatisfactory progress.

(16) It is a requirement that Higher Degrees Research Scholarship recipients will study full-time onshore. Circumstances will be considered by the Dean, Graduate School, where the student's project or research takes them temporarily offshore. In some cases, a Higher Degrees Research student can apply to receive scholarships on a part-time basis if there are compelling reasons (such as the need to provide full-time care of children or dependents that are disabled, sick, injured or elderly). Continuing eligibility will be subject to satisfactory academic progress.

(17) Candidates who are found to have provided misleading or inaccurate information to the University will be immediately re-assessed for their entitlement to the Higher Degree Research Scholarship.

## **Accepting your scholarship**

(18) If successful, the Graduate School will send applicants an offer of scholarship including: an official letter of offer, the Conditions of Award for your scholarship and an Acceptance Form.

(19) Successful applicants should return the Acceptance Form as soon as possible to inform the Graduate School of your intended start date. Requests to defer the Scholarship must be made via e-mail to [hdrscholarships@scu.edu.au](mailto:hdrs Scholarships@scu.edu.au). Requests to defer will require the support of your proposed supervisor and Director, Higher Degree Research.

(20) The Dean, Graduate School will review requests for deferment on a case by case basis. If funding for the scholarship is not available at a later time, a deferral may not be possible.

(21) The University stipend rate is the base rate set by the Commonwealth Government, indexed annually. All University-funded scholarships will be at this rate unless it is co-funded at a different rate by an external funding body.

## **Conditions of scholarship**

(22) Some scholarships, such as those externally funded or co-funded, may have different provisions to those specified in this Policy. In such cases, the provisions of the scholarship awarded will be detailed in the letter of offer and will take precedence over this Policy. Recipients should familiarise themselves with the specific conditions of their particular scholarship.

## **Duration of Scholarship**

(23) The maximum duration of a University Higher Degree Research Scholarship is three years and three months full time equivalent for a student undertaking Research Doctorate studies, and two years for a student undertaking Research Masters studies. The duration of the scholarship will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the scholarship.

(24) The University reserves the right to stipulate a specific duration for a scholarship, taking into account the availability of funds and other considerations. This will be detailed in the letter of offer and in accordance with requirements set by the University and any external funding body.

(25) No requests for extensions to scholarships will be granted.

## **Work**

(26) A student may undertake work outside the research degree, subject to the approval of their supervisors, Director, Higher Degree Research and Associate Dean (Research). International students must ensure this is consistent with the conditions of their student visa.

(27) A supervisor will not approve a student undertaking work unless they are satisfied that the work will not interfere with the student's study program. The work must be documented in all progress reports and regularly monitored.

(28) Work commitments will not be accepted as grounds for a request for an extension to candidature.

(29) A Scholarship recipient cannot be required to undertake employment at the university as a condition of their candidature or scholarship.

(30) Approval to undertake work may be declined or withdrawn where:

- a. The hours or timing jeopardise milestone achievement or satisfactory progress.
- b. Visa conditions could be breached;
- c. A conflict of interest, IP or confidentiality risk is identified;
- d. The role substantially overlaps with the thesis activity without appropriate agreements; or
- e. The approved university hours limit would be exceeded.

(31) Full-time Stipend Scholarship recipients can undertake paid employment for no more than sixteen hours per week over a 12 month period (52 weeks). The total number of permissible hours of paid work per 12 month period must not exceed 832 hours. If this is exceeded, the Stipend Scholarship recipients will have their scholarship cancelled. Approved work must be recorded in progress reports.

## **Satisfactory Progress for Scholarship Recipients**

(32) Under the conditions of award, all Scholarship recipients must maintain satisfactory progress to be eligible to continue receiving their scholarship. Please note that this does not imply you will have no problems with research delays during your award tenure. It is important that your progress is clearly reflected in the six monthly progress reports and the in-candidature review forums. Should your progress be found unsatisfactory you will be advised that your award will be terminated and the date from which this will apply.

## **Thesis allowance**

(33) As candidates are not required to submit hard copies of their final thesis for graduation, no thesis allowance is payable.

## Top up Scholarships

(34) Indigenous University Higher Degree Research Scholarship recipients may be entitled to:

- a. a top up scholarship funded by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor; and
- b. additional research funds as detailed in the scholarship letter of offer.

(35) For all other University Higher Degree Research Scholarship recipients, top up scholarships will only be approved where the funds are specifically provided for this purpose from an external organisation and are not from University administered funds.

## Section 4 - Leave Provisions

### General advice for claiming benefits

(36) To apply for leave, University Higher Degree Research Scholarship Recipients must use the Scholarship Candidate Sick Leave Application form.

### Sick Leave

(37) University Higher Degree Research Scholarship recipients must notify their principal supervisor of any period of illness as soon as possible. In addition, recipients must also notify their Director, Higher Degree Research and the Graduate School, as soon as practicable, and within 14 days, in order to claim sick leave.

(38) University Higher Degree Research Scholarship candidates in receipt of a co-funded, SCU-funded, externally-funded or industry-funded scholarship are entitled to a maximum ten days sick leave per year, per annum pro rata, noting that this leave will not extend the candidature or scholarship. Recipients must supply an appropriate medical certificate signed by a registered medical practitioner for sick leave longer than ten working days. If the recipient has an ongoing medical condition or limited ability to study, then this should be clearly stated by the medical practitioner on the certificate.

(39) If the period of sick leave is greater than ten days a candidate will be required to supply medical documentation to support a leave of absence (interruption), noting leave of this type will not be considered prior to Confirmation of Candidature. If necessary, and the illness is ongoing and serious, Scholarship Recipients can apply for a Leave of Absence or Suspension of Award (Change of Conditions of Enrolment).

(40) Sick leave may be used for the care of immediate family/dependents who are ill, and where the recipient is the primary care giver.

(41) Scholarship recipients, who are also international students, are eligible to apply for sick leave but any period granted will be deducted from the maximum six month extension of award.

### Parental Leave and Family and Domestic Violence Leave

(42) Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) Leave: Higher Degree Research Scholarship Recipients are entitled to 10 working days of paid FDV leave per year if undertaking full time student load, and 5 working days of paid FDV leave if undertaking a part time student load. FDV leave does not accrue or roll over.

(43) The period of stipend support increases by the length of any approved paid FDV leave provided under this policy.

(44) Paid maternity leave is available for up to 12 weeks for University Higher Degree Research Scholarship Recipients who have completed at least 52 weeks of continuous full-time study (or equivalent part-time study) on the award. Maternity leave entitlements will be calculated on a pro-rata basis for recipients who have transferred from part-time

to full-time during the year prior to requesting maternity leave.

(45) Maternity leave applications must be submitted to the Graduate School through the relevant Director, Higher Degree Research no later than four weeks before the expected date of commencement of leave. The application must be accompanied by a medical certificate from a medical practitioner stating the expected date of birth of the child or confirmation of the date of official adoption from an adoption agency.

(46) If eligible, partners of people giving birth may be entitled to a maximum of one week parental leave and should provide the same documents as required by the primary carer.

(47) Where a Scholarship Recipient is unable to resume their studies for medical reasons following approved maternity or parental leave, sick or other leave provisions may apply.

### **Recreation Leave**

(48) University Higher Degree Research Scholarship Recipients are entitled to 20 days per year of Recreation Leave. Recreation Leave will be available in the first year of the scholarship on a pro rata basis.

(49) Recreation leave will accrue and roll over within the tenure of the scholarship. This leave does not extend the maximum stipend support period.

(50) Proposed dates for Recreation Leave should be discussed with your supervisor in the first instance. Recreation Leave requires the approval of your principal supervisors and the Director, Higher Degree Research who must advise the Graduate School.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	27th February 2026
<b>Review Date</b>	24th September 2027
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Board
<b>Approval Date</b>	27th February 2026
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
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