

# Higher Degree Research Scholarships Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

- (1) This Policy establishes the University's selection principles and conditions for Southern Cross University (SCU) Postgraduate Research Scholarships.
- (2) This Policy applies to Southern Cross University Postgraduate Research Scholarship applicants and recipients.
- (3) The SCU Postgraduate Research Scholarships are not part of the Research Training Program funded by the Commonwealth Government. The University has a separate policy for Research Training Program Scholarship Stipends and Fee Offset Scholarships.

## Section 2 - Definitions

- (4) Southern Cross University Postgraduate Research Scholarship includes the following provided through the University:
  - a. Stipend Scholarship;
  - b. Fee Offset Scholarship; and/or
  - c. Externally funded/co-funded scholarship.

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

### Selection Policy

- (5) University application forms, selection and offer procedures and associated information will be available on the Graduate School website.
- (6) An applicant must be commencing or enrolled in a HDR program at the University.
- (7) 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 eligible requirements or variations to the procedure for selection and award of certain scholarships. Such variations will be documented in the relevant scholarship scheme guidelines.
- (8) Scholarship applications will not be considered where the documentary evidence provided in the application is insufficient or incomplete.
- (9) A candidate will not be selected for a Postgraduate 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 Postgraduate Research Scholarships, as well as the admission requirements stipulated in the rules of the respective program of study they are enrolling into.
- (10) The University reserves the right to make offers for Postgraduate Research Scholarships out of round where

candidates are deemed meritorious of an award.

(11) 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 Postgraduate Research Scholarship and if successful, will be paid only the balance of the initial scholarship.

(12) 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.

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

(14) 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 Postgraduate Research Scholarship if a candidate is in breach of any of its policies or is identified as making unsatisfactory progress.

(15) The expectation is that a Higher Degrees Research scholarship holder will normally study full-time. 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.

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

## **Accepting your scholarship**

(17) 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.

(18) 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) and your proposed supervisors. Requests to defer will normally also require the support of your proposed supervisor and School Director Higher Degree Research Training.

(19) The Dean Graduate Studies will review requests for deferment. If funding for the scholarship is not available at a later time, a deferral may not be possible.

(20) 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**

(21) 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 offer letter and will take precedence over this Policy. Recipients should familiarise themselves with the specific conditions of their particular scholarship.

## **Duration of Scholarship**

(22) The duration of a SCU Postgraduate Research Scholarship is three years 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.

(23) The University reserves the right to stipulate a specific duration for a scholarship, taking in to 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.

## **Work**

(24) A student may undertake work outside the research degree, subject to the approval of their supervisors, School Director, Higher Degrees Research Training and Head of School. International students must ensure this is consistent with the conditions of their student visa.

(25) A supervisor will not approve a student undertaking work unless he/she is 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.

(26) SCU Postgraduate Research Scholarship students must not be in receipt of a top up scholarship or other additional scholarship/salary to undertake their research degree which is greater than 75% of the Postgraduate Research Scholarship stipend rate.

(27) Students receiving more than 75% of the Postgraduate Research Scholarship stipend rate will have their primary scholarship cancelled. Income from sources unrelated to the research degree will not be taken into account.

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

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

(30) Full-time research degree students can undertake paid employment for no more than 8 hours per week or for a total of the equivalent of 8 hours per week over a 12 month period. The hours of work include marking and preparation associated with part-time teaching duties.

## **Satisfactory Progress for Scholarship Holders**

(31) Under the conditions of award, all Scholarship holders 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 6 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**

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

## **Scholarship Extensions**

(33) Requests for scholarship extensions will only be considered where it is due to delays in the research outside the control of the recipient and where the delay is related to the research rather than being of a personal nature.

(34) The maximum period of a scholarship extension will be six months, with requests over three months requiring a strong compelling case.

(35) Recipients of an externally funded scholarship can apply for a scholarship extension under the conditions outlined under point (22) provided the funding body has sufficient money in the budget for the approval of such an extension.

(36) The Dean, Graduate Studies will consider all requests for scholarship extensions and has the discretion to consider other exceptional circumstances as the basis for a request.

## Section 4 - Leave Provisions

### General advice for claiming benefits

(37) To apply for leave, SCU Postgraduate Research Scholarship Recipients must use the Candidate Sick and Annual Leave Application form available on the Graduate School website .

### Sick Leave

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

(39) SCU Postgraduate Research Scholarship recipients must supply an appropriate medical certificate signed by a registered medical practitioner for sick leave longer than 10 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.

(40) If necessary, and the illness is ongoing and serious, RTP Scholarship Recipients can apply for a Leave of Absence and/or Suspension of Award (Change of Conditions of Enrolment).

(41) Sick leave may be used for the care of immediate family/dependents who are ill, and where the recipient is the primary care giver. An extension to a scholarship, if allowed, will only apply where periods of medically attested sick leave are greater than 10 working days.

(42) RTP Scholarship Stipend recipients, who are also international students, are eligible to apply for sick leave but any period granted will be deducted from the maximum 6 month extension of award.

### Maternity and Parental Leave

(43) Paid maternity leave is available for up to 12 weeks for SCU Postgraduate 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.

(44) Maternity leave applications must be submitted to the Graduate School through the relevant School Director Higher Degree Research Training 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.

(45) 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 for maternity leave.

(46) Where an RTP 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

(47) SCU Postgraduate Research 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.

(48) A maximum of 20 days of Recreation Leave may be accrued. That is, unused leave in one year does not ordinarily carryover and must be taken during the scholarship tenure.

(49) 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 School Director, Higher Degrees Research Training who must advise the Graduate School.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
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<b>Head of Work Unit</b>	Damien Maher Dean, Graduate School
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