Higher Degree Research Scholarships Procedure

Version | Approved by | Approval date | Effective date | Next review
--------|-------------|---------------|----------------|---------------
X.X      | XXXXXXXXXXX | XXXXXXX      | XXXXXXX        | XXXXXXX

Procedure Statement

| Purpose | This Procedure outlines the terms, conditions and processes associated with awarding Higher Degree by Research scholarships at UNSW, including Australian Government Research Training Program scholarships.
| Scope   | This document applies to all Higher Degree Research scholarships administered by UNSW that provide tuition fee support, a living allowance stipend, associated allowances to HDR scholarship holders at the University.
| Are Local Documents on this subject permitted? | ☒ Yes, however Local Documents must be consistent with this University-wide document

Procedure Processes and Actions

1. Introduction

Higher Degree Research Scholarships (HDR) at UNSW are used to support research excellence, strategic, equity and diversity goals of the University. This procedure applies to the following HDR scholarships at UNSW:

- Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) scholarships (including RTP stipends, RTP Fees Offsets and RTP Allowances)
- University Postgraduate Awards (UPA)
- University International Postgraduate Award (UIPA)
- Tuition Fee Scholarship (TFS) including a living allowance stipend
- Strategic Scholarship schemes, including Scientia PhD Scholarship Scheme, Industry-engaged scholarships
- School/Faculty merit based Scholarships

The following scholarships are not in scope in this procedure:

- School/Faculty Top-Up Scholarships
- Scholarships provided by external institutions, donors, sponsors and countries

2. Scholarship administration

The Graduate Research School (GRS) is responsible for administering all HDR scholarships at UNSW. This can include HDR scholarships awarded by an external scholarship provider who has assigned the financial management of the scholarship to UNSW.

3. Application process

3.1. Prospective candidates

- Scholarship application rounds for domestic and international applicants will be advertised on the UNSW website.
- Prospective candidates must apply for a scholarship before the advertised deadline. Only complete applications can be considered. Applications which are incomplete will be put into the next round once all documentation and information has been received.
- Prospective candidates can apply for a scholarship at the same time as applying for a Higher Degree Research program in the University’s online system.
3.2. Currently enrolled candidates
a) Currently enrolled Doctoral candidates can apply for scholarships if they have completed up to and including four terms of full-time equivalent study.
b) Currently enrolled Masters candidates can apply for scholarships if they have completed up to an including two terms of full-time equivalent study.
c) Current candidates can submit applications direct to the GRS following advertised instructions on the website.

3.3. Merit based process
a) Scholarships are allocated in accordance with the objectives of the RTP and the research excellence, strategic, equity and diversity goals of UNSW.
b) Scholarships are awarded on a merit based, competitive process and in accordance with these objectives.
c) Priority will be given to applicants who have not already been awarded a research degree at the level for which they are applying.

3.4. Faculty or School scholarships
a) Faculties and/or Schools are responsible for the application selection process and outcome of scholarships restricted to applicants from their Faculty/School.
b) Faculties will notify the GRS of the nominated applicant and the GRS will arrange payment for the scholarship.

3.5. Outcomes
a) All scholarship applicants will be notified of the outcome in writing by the GRS.
b) All scholarship holders will be provided with a scholarship letter of offer which includes the terms and conditions for the particular scholarship.

3.6. Deferrals
a) Candidates may defer the commencement of their scholarship. Details about conditions for deferrals will be outlined in the scholarship letter of offer.

4. Supervision and resources
a) Before an offer of scholarship can be made, the School is required to declare that supervision and resources are available for the research project/applicant/applicant’s project. The admission application (where applicable) must be approved and finalised.
b) The resources available for HDR candidates are outlined in the Facilities and Resources to Support Higher Degree Research Candidates Guideline. The roles and responsibilities of HDR supervisors and candidates are outlined in the Higher Degree Research Supervisor Policy and Higher Degree Research Supervisor Procedure.

5. Eligibility
a) A candidate must either be a domestic or overseas student as defined in the Higher Education Support Act.
b) Candidates must have met the entry requirements for a Higher Degree Research program for which they are enrolled at UNSW as specified in the Admission to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure.

5.1. Living allowance stipend
Candidates must be enrolled in a HDR program on a full-time basis unless approval has been granted for a part-time award in accordance with Section 7 of this procedure.

5.2. RTP Fees Offset
a) Domestic candidates whose proposed candidature meets the objectives of the Research Training Program scheme will be awarded an RTP Tuition Fees Offset either at a part-time or full-time basis.
b) Candidates must not be receiving an equivalent award or scholarship from the Commonwealth government intended to offset tuition fees.

5.3. Ongoing eligibility
In order to maintain scholarship eligibility:

a) Candidates are expected to spend 35-40 hours per week on their research for a total of 48 weeks per year unless approved for part-time study in accordance with Section 7. Part-time candidates are expected to spend 15-20 hours per week on their research for a total of 48 weeks per year.

b) Candidates must be enrolled on campus and meet the minimum residency requirement of twelve months (full-time equivalent) at the University or at a UNSW affiliated institution during their candidature.

c) Candidates must not be receiving income (such as another scholarship) to support their research project if that income is greater than 75% of the primary scholarship rate (see Section 10).

d) Permission to ‘work away’ for research purposes may be granted to scholarship holders in accordance with the requirements outlined in the Variation to Candidature Procedure.

6. Benefits
Specific benefits for each HDR Scholarship vary and will be outlined in the scholarship letter of offer. Benefits may include one or more of the following:

6.1. Living Allowance Stipend
a) A living allowance stipend provides financial support to a candidate to assist with their general living costs while undertaking an HDR program.

b) The minimum stipend rate at UNSW is the same as the base full-time rate of the RTP as advertised on an annual basis by the Department of Education Skills and Employment.

c) Living allowance stipends will be indexed annually in accordance with the advertised RTP base rate.

d) Living allowance stipends are paid on a fortnightly basis into a nominated Australian bank account opened in the candidate’s name.

e) Living allowance stipends for approved part-time candidates (see Section 7) are awarded at 50% of the full-time scholarship rate. Part-time scholarships are considered taxable income by the Australian Taxation Office.

6.2. Tuition fee offset
a) An RTP tuition fees offset scholarship pays for the full cost of the HDR Candidate’s tuition fees for the scholarship duration as outlined in Section 8.

b) Candidates who remain enrolled over the maximum duration of the scholarship may become liable for any remaining tuition fees.

6.3. Overseas Student Health Cover allowance (OSHC)

a) A scholarship for an international candidate may include an allowance for OSHC at the single rate of UNSW’s preferred provider for the duration of the HDR program. This rate will be advertised on the UNSW website.

b) The OSHC allowance must be claimed at the commencement of the scholarship.

6.4. Relocation Allowance

a) A scholarship recipient may claim a relocation allowance upon commencement of their HDR program.

b) Candidates must have been located overseas or interstate at the time of the scholarship application and must not have studied at an institution in NSW or ACT within 12 months prior to applying for the scholarship.
c) International scholarship holders may claim $2000. Domestic scholarship holders may claim $1000.

6.5. Thesis allowance
a) A scholarship holder may claim a thesis allowance to contribute to the costs of producing a thesis. The thesis allowance is $400 and may be claimed following thesis submission.

7. Part-time awards
Applications for part-time living allowance stipends must be made in writing to the Director, Graduate Research School. International candidates can only receive a part-time award if permitted under the conditions of their visa. Part-time scholarships will only be approved if the candidate can demonstrate the following:

a) Significant family caring responsibilities which prevent the candidate from undertaking a full-time study load.

b) A disability or ongoing medical condition which prevents the candidate from undertaking a full-time study load.

8. Duration of award
Unless otherwise specified in the scholarship letter of offer, the following standard duration of award applies:

8.1. RTP Tuition Fee Offsets
The maximum duration of an RTP Tuition Fee offset is:

a) 2 years full time equivalent for Research Masters candidates

b) 4 years full time equivalent for Domestic Research Doctorate candidates

c) 3.5 years full time equivalent for International Research Doctorate candidates

8.2. Living allowance stipends
The maximum duration of a living allowance stipend is:

a) 2 years full time equivalent for Research Masters candidates

b) 3.5 years full time equivalent for Research Doctorate candidates

8.3. Tuition Fee scholarships
The maximum duration of a Tuition Fee scholarship (including living allowance stipend) is:

a) 2 years full time equivalent for Research Masters candidates

b) 3.5 years full time equivalent for Research Doctorate candidates

8.4. Changes to scholarship duration
a) The duration of a scholarship will be reduced by periods of study prior to the commencement of the scholarship.

b) The duration of a living allowance scholarship will be extended by periods of approved additional sick leave and/or parental leave as outlined in Section 9.

9. Leave
Unless otherwise specified in the scholarship letter of offer, scholarship holders are entitled to the following types of leave. International candidates must check the conditions of their visa before applying for leave. For the purposes of leave, a ‘working day’ is a week day (Monday to Friday).

9.1. Annual leave
a) Scholarship holders are entitled to 20 working days per annum of paid leave for recreational purposes. This leave is to be taken during the scholarship.

b) Candidates must request paid annual leave from their supervisor.
c) Leave cannot be accrued during the scholarship and the scholarship will not be extended by periods of paid annual leave taken.

9.2. Standard sick leave up to 10 working days
a) Scholarship holders are entitled to 10 working days per annum of standard paid sick leave. This is within the regular award duration. Standard sick leave may also be used for candidates with family caring responsibilities where there are compassionate and compelling circumstances.
b) Candidates must negotiate any standard paid sick leave from their supervisor.
c) The scholarship will not be extended by periods of paid standard sick leave taken.

9.3. Extended sick leave
a) Scholarship holders are entitled to receive extended paid sick leave of up to a total of 60 working days where the candidate has insufficient sick leave entitlements available in Section 9.2.
b) Extended sick leave may also be used for candidates with family caring responsibilities where there are compassionate and compelling circumstances.
c) Applications for extended paid sick leave must be submitted to the GRS with an accompanying medical certificate and/or other appropriate documentation. Candidates will need endorsement from their supervisor.
d) If extended sick leave is required for the majority of a Term, the candidate will need to take program leave for that Term.
e) The duration of the scholarship will be extended by the duration of the extended sick leave.

9.4. Parental leave
a) Scholarship holders who have completed 12 months (full time equivalent) of their scholarship are entitled to receive paid parental leave for a birth or adoption.
b) If the scholarship holder is the primary carer of the child, the recipient is entitled to a maximum of 60 working days paid parental leave during the scholarship.
c) If the scholarship holder is the partner of the primary carer of the child, the recipient is entitled to a maximum of five working days parental leave during the scholarship.
d) Applications for parental leave must be submitted to the GRS with an accompanying medical certificate and/or other appropriate documentation. Candidates will need acknowledgement of the leave period from their supervisor.
e) If parental leave is required for the majority of a Term, the candidate needs to take program leave for that Term.
f) The duration of the scholarship will be extended by the duration of the parental leave.

9.5. Program Leave
a) Scholarship holders may apply for unpaid program leave in accordance with the Variation of Candidature Procedure.
b) Any periods of approved program leave will not impact the total duration of the scholarship.

10. Income from other sources
a) Scholarship holders must not be receiving income from another source to support their HDR program if that income is greater than 75% of the stipend rate.
b) Income from sources not related to the candidate’s HDR program is not taken into account in this 75% rule.
c) International candidates must check the conditions of their visa before undertaking paid employment.

11. Variation of program
Scholarship holders may request changes to their research program during their candidature. The process for requesting changes is outlined in the Variation of Candidature Procedure. Changes to the research program may impact a scholarship as outlined below.
11.1. Change to research program and/or supervision
   a) Candidates must check with their funding provider and scholarship terms and conditions before requesting any change to their research program or supervision.

11.2. Transferring from a Research Masters to a Research Doctorate
   a) A scholarship recipient may continue to hold their scholarship if they have been approved for a transfer from a Research Masters program to a Research Doctorate program.
   b) The maximum duration of the recipient’s scholarship will be that of the new program as outlined in Section 8.

11.3. Transferring from a Research Doctorate to a Research Masters
   a) If a scholarship recipient transfers from a Research Doctorate to a Research Masters, the maximum duration of the scholarship will be 2 years (full-time equivalent) from the date that the candidate commenced the Doctoral HDR program.
   b) If the scholarship has already been held for more than 2 years (full-time equivalent), it will cease on the date of the transfer.

11.4. Transferring from another Higher Education Provider
   a) Candidates transferring from another Higher Education Provider to UNSW may be eligible for RTP scholarships, provided UNSW has sufficient RTP funds available and the other eligibility criteria set out in this procedure are satisfied.
   b) The recipient’s previous period holding the scholarship counts against the maximum duration determined in Section 8.

12. Termination
A scholarship will be terminated when the scholarship recipient:
   a) Has their candidature discontinued
   b) Withdraws from the HDR Program
   c) Ceases to be enrolled and has not requested a period of leave
   d) Ceases to meet eligibility requirements outlined in Section 5
   e) Changes research topic and/or supervision which are not supported by the particular scholarship as indicated in Section 11.1
   f) Submits their thesis
   g) Exhausts the maximum duration as outlined in Section 8
   h) Does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of leave
   i) Ceases to be enrolled full-time and does not have approval to receive the scholarship part-time in accordance with Section 7
   j) Has not provided true, accurate and complete information in relation to their scholarship application and/or scholarship tenure
   k) Is in breach of this procedure or any condition of the scholarship as outlined in the scholarship letter of offer

13. RTP Acknowledgement
All HDR candidates in receipt of an Australian Government RTP stipend or tuition fee offset must acknowledge the Australian Government’s contribution during and after completion of the HDR program. The acknowledgement must include the mention of support through the ‘Australian Government Research Training Program’.

14. Enrichment activities
If opportunities for industry placements, research internships, professional practice activities or other similar enrichment activities undertaken as part of an HDR program are available, the Dean of Graduate Research must be informed regarding the impact on the scholarship duration and stipend rates.
15. Grievance process
Grievances about the application of these procedures are managed in accordance with the Student Complaint Procedure.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accountabilities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsible Officer</td>
<td>Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Training and Entrepreneurship and Dean of Graduate Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact Officer</td>
<td>Director, Graduate Research School</td>
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<tr>
<th>Legislative Compliance</th>
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<tr>
<td>This procedure supports the University’s compliance with the following legislation:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Standards for Education (2005)</td>
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<td>Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (Cth)</td>
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<td>Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)</td>
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<td>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (Cth)</td>
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| Parent Document (Policy) | Higher Degree Research Scholarships Policy |
| Supporting Documents | Nil |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Documents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions Policy</td>
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<td>Admissions to Higher Degree Research Programs Procedure</td>
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<td>Conditions for Award of Doctor of Philosophy Policy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conditions for Award of Master by Research Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conditions for Award of Master of Philosophy Policy</td>
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<td>Facilities and Resources to Support Higher Degree Research Candidates Guidelines</td>
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<td>Higher Degree Research Supervision Policy</td>
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<td>Higher Degree Research Supervision Procedure</td>
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<td>Student Complaint Procedure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variation of Candidature Procedure</td>
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| Superseded Documents | Higher Degree Research Scholarships Procedure, v1.3 |
| File Number | 2017/15228 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitions and Acronyms</th>
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<tr>
<td>Compassionate and compelling circumstances</td>
<td>Circumstances beyond a candidate’s control which have an impact on the candidate’s ability to study and/or undertake research. This includes serious illness or injury to the candidate or close family member, pregnancy or childbirth, caring responsibilities for dependants, death of a family member, a traumatic experience (eg accident or crime), a major political upheaval or natural disaster in the candidate’s home country requiring emergency travel or disruption to studies, and visa processing delays.</td>
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<td>Equivalent Full-Time Study Load (EFTSL)</td>
<td>A measure of study load for one year on a normal full-time basis. At UNSW 1 EFTSL is defined as 48 units of credit (UOC).</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTE</td>
<td>Full-time equivalent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Full-time enrolment for one year is defined as 48 UOC which equates to 1.0 Equivalent Full-time Student Load (EFTSL).</td>
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<td><strong>HDR</strong></td>
<td>A higher degree by research which is a Research Doctorate or Research Masters program for which at least two-thirds of the student load for the program is required as research work</td>
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<td><strong>Leave</strong></td>
<td>A period of time during which a scholarship holder is not receiving RTP or UNSW Scholarship support, which has been approved in accordance with UNSW Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research Doctorate</strong></td>
<td>A Level 10 Doctoral Degree (Research) qualification as described in the AQF</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research Masters</strong></td>
<td>A Level 9 Masters Degree (Research) qualification as described in the AQF</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RTP</strong></td>
<td>The Research Training Program, a research block grant provided to the University by the Australian Government to support candidates undertaking a Higher Degree by Research</td>
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<td><strong>RTP Allowance</strong></td>
<td>A type of RTP Scholarship to assist with ancillary costs incurred by an HDR candidate in undertaking an HDR course of study</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RTP Fees Offset</strong></td>
<td>A type of RTP Scholarship which covers the tuition fee liability that would otherwise be payable by an HDR candidate</td>
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<td><strong>RTP Scholarship</strong></td>
<td>A form of support awarded to a candidate funded by the Australian Government</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RTP Stipend</strong></td>
<td>A type of RTP Scholarship to assist candidates with general living costs</td>
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**Revision History**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Approved by</th>
<th>Approval date</th>
<th>Effective date</th>
<th>Sections modified</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Infrastructure)</td>
<td>28 June 2017</td>
<td>28 June 2017</td>
<td>New Procedure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Director of Governance</td>
<td>7 July 2017</td>
<td>7 July 2017</td>
<td>Administrative update to the following sections: Purpose, 1, 2.1(a), Legislative Compliance and Definitions.</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research</td>
<td>9 February 2018</td>
<td>9 February 2018</td>
<td>Minor amendments: sections 1; 4.3; 4.5; 4.6; 5.3; 11.</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
<td>President and Vice-Chancellor</td>
<td>5 November 2018</td>
<td>1 January 2019</td>
<td>Minor amendment to accommodate 3+ academic calendar</td>
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<td>2.0</td>
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<td>Full review</td>
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