

# Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 6 Scholarships

## Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) Nil

## Section 2 - Scope / Application

(2) This Procedure outlines the types of Higher Degree by Research (HDR) scholarships offered, the application, selection and offer process, conditions of awards and variations to scholarships.

## Section 3 - Definitions

(3) Higher Degree by Research (HDR)

## Section 4 - Policy Statement

(4) [Higher Degrees by Research Policy](#) .

## Section 5 - Procedures

### Part A - Types of Higher Degree by Research Scholarships

(5) Victoria University (VU) administers a range of scholarships for candidates undertaking a HDR. Scholarships are funded by the Commonwealth Government, the University or its constituent divisions, or by external authorities.

(6) Scholarships may fund tuition fees, where applicable, and/or a living stipend.

(7) Scholarships are normally of one and a half years to two years duration for a Masters by Research degree and three years for a doctoral degree (with the possibility of one six month extension). Any previous study credited towards an award will be deducted from the duration of the scholarship.

(8) The Graduate Research Centre (GRC) oversees the administration of all University-auspiced graduate research scholarships and provides advice and support to Colleges and Victoria University International (VUI) in the establishment, selection and ongoing administration of these scholarships.

### Part B - Timing of scholarship rounds

(9) The major round of merit-based VU research degree stipend scholarships (funded by the Australian government and the University) is advertised no later than September each year with an advertised closing date in late October. The ranking and selection for these scholarships takes place in November-December each year through agreed and

documented University selection processes as outlined in Part D of this procedure.

(10) When budget permits, the University may also run a VU research degree stipend scholarship round (for scholarships funded by the Australian government and the University) for mid-year entry. Such rounds will be advertised no later than April each year with an advertised closing date in late May. The ranking and selection for mid-year scholarships takes place in June-July each year through agreed and documented University selection processes as outlined in Part D of this procedure.

## **Part C - Applying for HDR scholarships**

(11) Eligibility for scholarships varies depending on the scholarship, and whether the applicant is an Australian student (defined as an Australian citizen/permanent resident), a New Zealand citizen or an international student (non-resident).

(12) An application for a place in an HDR course at VU is not considered an application for a scholarship. Applicants who wish to be considered for an HDR scholarship must complete and submit the Victoria University [Graduate Research Scholarship online application form](#).

(13) International applicants are advised to submit the Victoria University Graduate Research Scholarship online application form.

## **Part D - Scholarship selection process**

### **Initial assessment of eligibility for scholarships**

(14) The [Senior Coordinator, Admissions and Scholarships, GRC](#) oversees the central assessment of all applications received against the eligibility criteria for each scholarship type.

(15) All PhD, Professional Doctorate and Masters by Research applicants must meet the University's minimum academic entry requirement of a 70 per cent (Distinction) average in the most relevant qualifying degree. However, to be considered for HDR scholarships applicants are expected to have at minimum 1st class honours (80 per cent plus average) or the equivalent to 1st class honours (H1 equivalence).

(16) If supervision cannot be confirmed, and/or it is determined that the University is not able to resource the proposed project, the applicant will not be ranked for a scholarship.

### **Academic Achievement Score**

(17) The GRC calculates an Academic Achievement Score (AAS) for each applicant.

(18) Applicants may have provided additional transcripts for other courses they have completed (eg a Graduate Diploma or Masters by coursework after Honours) which may or may not have been used in the calculation of the AAS. However, all transcripts will be forwarded to the College to inform the ranking process. The degree used for calculation of the AAS is noted by GRC.

### **Initial ranking for scholarships by Colleges**

(19) All applications that meet the minimum admission criteria are forwarded to the relevant College Review Panels for assessment. Relevant Research Centre/Institute Directors, or their nominees, within Colleges shall normally serve on the College Review Panel. Where the potential for a conflict of roles exists, please refer to the delegations outlined in the HDR Procedure 3.

(20) College Review Panels make nominations for scholarships and may also indicate if they wish to consider the

applicant for a full-fee international place or a local Research Training Scheme (RTS) or full-fee place, irrespective of whether the scholarship ranking leads to a scholarship for the applicant. This task is undertaken in consultation with College/Centre/Institute Directors as applicable.

### **Additional points allocation**

(21) The ranking process involves the potential for the allocation of additional points above the AAS for each application that is considered by the College Review Panels, This results in a Tertiary Research Scores (TRS) for each applicant. Each category can attract the following maximum points:

- a. Research Experience - maximum of 3 points. If research experience is used to deem H1 equivalence, then no additional points can be allocated in this category;
- b. Publications (including creative performances) — maximum of 3 points;
- c. Referees' Reports — maximum of 2 points;
- d. Significant Professional (or other) Skills/Knowledge — maximum of 2 points;
- e. Alignment with Area of Research Focus (AoRF) — maximum of 2 points. When applicants have indicated that their application is aligned with an AoRF, the senior academic responsible for coordination of scholarship applications for each AoRF will make a recommendation to the relevant College Review Panels on the points to be allocated.

(22) After the Review Panel has assessed the applications and allocated any additional points, a list of the applicants' TRS's will be submitted by the set date to the Senior Coordinator, Admissions and Scholarships, together with any additional paperwork required such as H1 Equivalence forms.

### **Final ranking of scholarships by the University**

(23) The Senior Coordinator, Admissions and Scholarships will submit the outcomes of College ranking to the University Ranking Committee (the Committee).

(24) The Committee will consider the applications ranked by each College in line with the guidelines for each scholarship scheme .

(25) The Committee will be informed if there is a possible conflict of interest where a potential supervisor is also a member of the Committee and this will be managed accordingly.

(26) The Committee is responsible for ensuring an equitable approach across Colleges in the allocation of additional points, and will finalise the University ranking lists for the various scholarship categories.

## **Part E - Offer of scholarship**

(27) Each successful applicant for a scholarship will receive a letter from the GRC advising them of the scholarship award benefits and conditions and will be asked to sign an undertaking about the conditions upon which the scholarship is being offered.

(28) A small number of unsuccessful applicants may be placed on a reserve list and may be eligible to be offered a scholarship if these become available in the event that a higher ranked applicant does not take up their scholarship.

## **Part F - Offer of enrolment without scholarship**

(29) In the case of places and supervision is being available, unsuccessful domestic scholarship applicants, who meet minimum criteria, who have indicated that they would accept a RTS place may be offered of an RTS place in the designated course. If RTS places are unavailable, the College/Centres/Institutes may offer a full fee-paying place to the

above mentioned applicants.

(30) Unsuccessful international scholarship applicants who have indicated they would accept a full fee-paying place may also be considered for a full fee-paying place in the designated course, if they meet minimum criteria and there are places and supervision available.

(31) Normally, all applicants will be advised of the outcome of their applications within 60 University business days of the closing date of applications.

## **Part G - Scholarship conditions of award**

(32) The University and awardee will abide by the conditions of award which are detailed in Scholarship Award Benefits and Conditions document provided to the applicant at the time they are advised of the successful outcome of their scholarship application.

(33) Graduate scholarships are intended to support candidates engaged in full-time research and study. An award holder is only permitted to undertake a strictly limited amount of paid employment as outlined in the Scholarships Award Benefits and Conditions . Some awards allow part-time enrolment for local candidates for compelling reasons.

(34) HDR candidates who have been awarded a full-time scholarship at VU are unable to retain the scholarship if they are also enrolled in another full-time course. In exceptional cases, candidates may be permitted to enrol in another course on a part-time basis subject to approval from the Dean, Graduate Research in consultation with the College Director, Research Training.

(35) Candidates are only eligible to retain their scholarship whilst they abide by the rules and conditions associated with the scholarship.

(36) If the GRC and/or the College/Centres/Institutes become aware that the candidate is not abiding by the conditions of their award, they will immediately advise the candidate of this and, unless evidence is forthcoming to the contrary within five working days, scholarship payments will be suspended and a formal review will commence.

(37) A scholarship awarded by VU cannot be transferred to another institution, and must be relinquished if a candidate opts to transfer their Candidature to another institution.

## **Part H - Variations to scholarships**

(38) Scholarship awardees in receipt of a stipend who wish to take sick leave (more than the normal annual allowance) or maternity leave must apply through the GRC Senior Coordinator, Admissions and Scholarships for scholarship leave by submitting an [Application for Scholarship Leave Form](#) as well as an [Application for Intermission form](#) . With regard to international candidates in receipt of VU-administered scholarships the GRC will seek approval from VUI prior to an [Application for Intermission form](#) being processed.

(39) Depending on the [Benefits and Conditions of the particular award](#) , a candidate may be entitled to apply for an extension of their scholarship when they are applying for their first candidature extension. If eligible for a scholarship extension, the application should be lodged with the Senior Coordinator, Admissions and Scholarships , on the [Application for Extension form](#) for consideration by their College Director, Research and Research Training and, where applicable, the relevant Centre/Institute Director. International candidates should consult with VUI before lodging respective applications for extension.

# Section 6 - Guidelines

(40) Nil

## Status and Details

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<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Andrew Hill Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Impact Andrew.Hill@vu.edu.au
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	John Price Dean, Graduate Research 9919 2046
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Elizabeth Smith Manager, Candidature +61 3 99194228

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Higher Degree by Research (HDR)"** - A Higher Degree by Research (HDR) is a postgraduate award at Master or Doctoral level at AQF 9 or 10 respectively, of which two thirds or more is research and research training. The major part of assessment of these courses must be in the form of reporting the outcomes of a research project/s conducted as the research component of the degree. A HDR may also include a coursework component, which is one or more accredited units of study designed to address and area(s) of content and/or skill development within the HDR program.