

Research Training Program Scholarships Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure outlines the eligibility, application, and conditions of scholarship provision for the Research Training Program (RTP) Higher Degree by Research (HDR).

Section 2 - Accountability

| Accountable/ Responsible Officer | Role |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Accountable Officer | Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Impact |
| Responsible Officer | Manager, Research Funding |

Section 3 - Scope

(2) All eligible students applying for or enrolled in HDR programs who are eligible for RTP Scholarships.

Section 4 - Definitions

(3) Higher Degree by Research (HDR)

Section 5 - Policy

(4) [Higher Degree by Research Scholarships Policy](#)

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

| Roles | Responsibilities |
|---|--|
| Domestic and International applicants for RTP Stipend | Submit application and required documents by deadline. |
| International applicants for RTP Fee Offset | Submit application to competitive merit based round which awards RTP Stipend scholarships. |

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|---|---|
| Deputy Director, Flagship Research Institutes | <p>Assess RTP Stipend applications to be forwarded to the University Scholarship Ranking Committee for consideration.</p> <p>Assess International RTP Fee Offset applications to be forwarded to the University Scholarship Ranking Committee for consideration.</p> <p>Consider RTP Fee Offset applications for domestic students (without a stipend scholarship) automatically as part of the scholarship or admission application processes; decide successful applicants.</p> |
| University Scholarship Ranking Committee(s) | <p>Assess RTP Stipend applications and decide successful applicants.</p> <p>Assess International RTP Fee Offset scholarship applications and decide successful applicants.</p> |
| Manager, Research Funding | Make RTP Stipend (including International Fee Offset) offers in writing. |
| Senior Officer, Admissions and Enrolments | Make Domestic RTP Fee Offset offers in writing. |

Part B - Eligibility Requirements and Student Support

(5) RTP scholarships can be one of, or a combination of the following types of support:

- a. RTP Stipend - an RTP Scholarship to assist eligible students with living costs;
- b. RTP Fee Offset- an RTP Scholarship to assist with tuition fees that would otherwise be payable by the student; and
- c. RTP Allowance - an RTP Scholarship to assist with ancillary costs incurred by a HDR candidate in undertaking a research degree; including, but not limited to Overseas Student Health Cover, relocation costs, thesis printing and academic publication costs.

Eligibility Requirements

(6) To be eligible for an RTP Stipend, RTP Fee Offset or RTP Allowance, a student must be a domestic student or an international student enrolled in an accredited HDR course of study at Victoria University (VU).

RTP Stipend

(7) To be eligible for an RTP Stipend:

- a. student must not be receiving income from another source to support that student's general living costs while undertaking their course of study if that income is greater than 75 percent of that student's RTP Stipend rate;
- b. income unrelated to the course of study or income received for the student's course of study but not for the purposes of supporting general living costs is not to be taken into account.

RTP Fees Offset

(8) To be eligible for an RTP Fee Offset a student must not be receiving an equivalent award or scholarship from the Commonwealth designed to offset HDR fees.

Student Support - RTP Stipends

(9) RTP Stipends will be paid as follows:

- a. VU will offer each student selected to receive an RTP Stipend scholarship a stipend rate at least equal to the base full-time RTP Stipend rate and no more than the maximum full-time RTP Stipend rate as advised by the Commonwealth for the relevant year; and

- b. Each year, VU will pay each student their full-time or part-time RTP Stipend rate in proportion to the period of time for which the student has been supported with an RTP Scholarship.
- c. RTP stipend values are payable at the applicable rate from 1 January to 31 December for the relevant RTP Grant Year. There is a minimum stipend value (base rate) and a maximum full-time RTP Stipend rate set each year. The base and maximum full-time stipend rates are the same as for the preceding year, indexed in accordance with the method outlined in the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(Cth\)](#), Part 2.4.
- d. If a student receiving an RTP Stipend scholarship is approved by VU to undertake their HDR on a half-time basis, the student's part-time RTP Stipend rate will be 50 per cent of the full-time rate for the relevant year.
- e. VU will make fortnightly payments directly to students in respect of their RTP Stipend. To avoid doubt, payment into an account in the student's name with an Australian financial institution is considered to be a payment directly to the student.

Periods of Support

(10) VU will provide a student with the following support duration, according to course of study:

- a. a minimum of three years and a maximum of four years at the discretion of VU if the student is undertaking an eligible Research Doctorate at a full-time student load or for a minimum of six years and up to a maximum of eight years at the discretion of VU or a part-time student load; or
- b. a maximum of two years if the student is undertaking a Research Masters at a full-time student load or a maximum of four years for a part-time student load.

(11) The student's period of support will be increased for any periods of leave approved by VU in relation to Part D of this Procedure. Any period of intermission approved by VU does not contribute to the period of support. The period of support is calculated from the course of study commencement date, not the commencement of the RTP Scholarship.

(12) Any optional industry placement undertaken during the degree will not extend the duration of the RTP Scholarship. RTP Stipend recipients will continue to receive their stipend while on placement.

(13) If a student lapses or discontinues from a course of study, and wishes to return within three years to the same course of study, they must apply for reinstatement of candidature. The time they were previously enrolled will be deducted from the maximum period of support. If a student lapses or discontinues from a course of study, and subsequently applies for a new course of study at the same level, they will normally have the time already enrolled deducted from their maximum period of support unless three years have elapsed since the date of discontinuation.

Part C - Application, Selection and Offers Processes

Application Process

RTP Stipend

(14) The RTP Stipend scholarship application process is through the VU Research Scholarship Application round. Both domestic and international applicants must submit a completed application and required documents by the application deadline in order to be considered each year. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

(15) Please see the [Graduate Research Scholarships website](#) for details.

RTP Fee Offset

(16) International Students

- a. RTP Fee Offset applications for international applicants are considered through the competitive merit based

round which awards RTP Stipend scholarships.

- b. Please see the [Graduate Research Scholarships website](#) for details.

(17) Domestic Students

- a. RTP Fee Offset scholarship applications for domestic students (without a stipend scholarship) will be considered by the relevant Deputy Director, Flagship Research Institute or nominee taking into account supervisory capacity and other resources. This is considered automatically as part of the scholarship application process.

Selection Process

(18) The scholarship selection process and guidelines are published on VU's [Graduate Research Scholarships website](#). The competitive selection process accords with the relevant [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2017 \(Cth\)](#) and the fairness requirements in Subdivision 19-D of Part 2-1 of the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(Cth\)](#).

RTP Stipend and/or RTP Fee Offset for second degree

(19) Applicants who have had an RTP Fee Offset and/or RTP Stipend for a Research Masters are eligible to apply for RTP funding for a doctoral degree.

(20) Applicants who have had RTP Fee Offset to undertake a doctoral degree and apply for a second degree at the same level, or apply for a Research Masters, will be considered at the discretion of the Dean, Graduate Research or nominee, and then on merit through the application process in Part C of this Procedure.

Compulsory onshore location

(21) Applicants who receive RTP Fee Offset and/or RTP Stipend scholarship funding must be located onshore and in Melbourne for the duration of their course. Exceptions to this are for fieldwork or industry placements, or under exceptional and extenuating circumstances with approval from the Deputy Director, Flagship Research Institute or nominee.

RTP Stipend

(22) RTP Stipend scholarships are awarded as the result of a competitive selection process. Scholarship application rounds will be assessed on academic merit, relevant research experience, publications, relevant work experience, referee reports and alignment with VU's areas of research focus.

(23) Selection is determined by the University Scholarship Ranking Committee, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Impact.

(24) Applicants who have not had RTP Stipend funding for a degree at the same level will be given priority in the scholarship ranking, all other factors being equal.

RTP Fee Offset

(25) RTP Fee Offsets will only be offered to international students as a result of a competitive selection process as outlined in Clause(19).

RTP Scholarship offers

(26) All RTP Scholarship offers will be made in writing by the Manager, Research Funding or nominee and include advice about the types of assistance and support being offered, the conditions and periods of support, and the estimated annual value for Australian Government support.

(27) VU will only offer an RTP scholarship to an eligible student through:

- a. the relevant procedures outlined in Parts B and C above; or
- b. at the discretion of VU, an RTP Allowance may be approved, provided the student meets the eligibility criteria outlined in Part B of this Procedure; or
- c. at the discretion of VU, agreeing to continue RTP support for a student who is transferring to VU and is in receipt of an RTP scholarship at their original institution; or
- d. the student being a continuing student from 2016.

Arrangements for Continuing Students

(28) VU will offer each continuing student, who was previously receiving support through the former Research Training Scheme, Australian Postgraduate Awards or International Postgraduate Research Scholarships, an RTP Scholarship in a form that provides at least equivalent support to that provided, or that would have been provided, through predecessor Australian Government programs.

Part D - Provision for Intermission and Paid Leave

(29) Paid leave entitlements for RTP Stipend recipients include:

- a. Up to 20 working days paid recreation leave and 10 working days paid sick leave for each year of the RTP Stipend. These leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the RTP Stipend but are forfeited when the stipend is terminated. Recreation leave and normal sick leave do not extend payments.
- b. Students are entitled to receive additional paid sick leave of up to a total of 60 (sixty) working days during the duration of the RTP Stipend for periods of illness where the student has insufficient sick leave entitlements under Clause (28)a. above, providing that a medical certificate has been provided by a student to the Graduate Research Centre.
- c. Sick leave entitlements (including additional sick leave) may also be used to cover leave for students with family care responsibilities, with documentary evidence provided.
- d. Students who have completed 12 months of their RTP Stipend are entitled to a maximum of 60 (sixty) working days paid maternity leave during the duration of their RTP Stipend. Paid maternity leave may also be approved if the student has adopted a child.
- e. Students who have completed 12 months of their RTP Stipend, and who are partners of women giving birth, may be entitled to a two week period of paid parenting leave at the time of the birth (or adoption).

Part E - Employment Restrictions

(30) VU limits full time RTP Stipend holders to a maximum of 15 hours paid employment per week, during 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday, provided the supervisor is satisfied that the part-time work does not interfere with the candidate's research program.

(31) Fractional appointments must not exceed 0.4 and sessional teaching must take into account that one (1) hour of class contact time constitutes three actual working hours when marking and preparation times are taken into account.

(32) Paid employment undertaken must not interfere with an award holder's study program. A university cannot require the award holder to undertake employment.

Part F - Provision for Changes in Enrolment

(33) Any significant change in the direction of a research project post confirmation of candidature will require a new research proposal to be submitted and confirmed as per the University's [Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 3 Pre-](#)

[Candidature and Candidature.](#)

(34) Changing from full-time to part-time enrolment, or vice-versa, must be discussed with the candidate's supervisor and Graduate Researcher Support Officer:

- a. Domestic RTP Fee Offset candidate can apply to change their enrolment from full-time to part-time and vice versa;
- b. Domestic RTP Stipend candidates can only apply to be part-time under certain circumstances (medical leave or carer's leave) and this is to be approved by the Dean, Graduate Research or nominee;
- c. International RTP Fee Offset and/or RTP Stipend candidates are not eligible to enrol part-time except under exceptional circumstances. International students must consult with VU International (via AskVU) if they need to make any change to their enrolment.

(35) An RTP Fee Offset and/or RTP Stipend student who successfully downgrades their degree to a Research Masters will have their candidature duration shortened to two (2) years EFT. If the student has already been enrolled for longer than two (2) years EFT, their RTP scholarship will cease immediately.

(36) An RTP Fee Offset and/or RTP Stipend student who successfully upgrades their degree from a Research Masters to a doctoral degree will have their scholarship duration extended accordingly.

(37) Transfer from another institution to VU - An RTP scholarship student at another institution who wishes to transfer to VU will need to follow the process outlined in [Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 3 Pre-Candidature and Candidature](#) for an application with advanced candidature. The duration of enrolment already consumed at another institution will be deducted from the maximum duration of the relevant RTP Scholarship type/s. Any transfer to VU from another institution will depend on the RTP funding available in that year for the relevant RTP Scholarship type/s.

(38) Transfer to another institution - An RTP scholarship student at VU who wishes to transfer to another institution is required to:

- a. Contact the equivalent of the Graduate Research Centre at the other institution to determine the requirements to transfer their enrolment.
- b. Apply to the Graduate Research Centre for a letter outlining the details of their enrolment including the start date, end date, periods of intermission and elapsed duration of enrolment.
- c. Once the student has received an offer from the other institution they are required to submit a discontinuation form to the Graduate Research Centre.
- d. Upon confirmation of the withdrawal date the Graduate Research Centre will provide a letter with final confirmation of the relevant dates of enrolment.
- e. The length of time already consumed on an RTP Fee Offset Scholarships and/or a RTP Stipend Scholarship will be deducted from the remaining duration according to the RTP Scholarship Policy of the new institution.

Part G - Termination of an RTP Scholarship

(39) An RTP scholarship will be terminated on the date that the candidate's thesis is submitted for examination, or at the end of the award duration, whichever is earlier.

(40) The RTP scholarship will be terminated before the end date of the award duration if, after due inquiry, the University concludes through an Unsatisfactory Progress nomination, that the award holder has not fulfilled award obligations, not met the eligibility requirements or if satisfactory progress is not being made.

(41) The RTP Award will also be terminated under the following circumstances:

- a. when the student ceases to be a full-time student and when approval has not been obtained to hold the scholarship on a part-time basis;
- b. on the withdrawal, incapacity or death of the student;
- c. if the award holder does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of intermission, or does not make arrangements to extend that period of intermission;
- d. if, in the opinion of VU, the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of the award, and no suitable alternative arrangements, such as supervision and/or facilities, can be made for continuation of the degree; or
- e. if the student fails to re-enrol or maintain a continuous enrolment.

(42) An RTP Stipend will be suspended if a student is nominated for Unsatisfactory Progress until the resolution of such proceedings.

Part H - Acknowledgement of RTP Support in Publications

(43) The University is required by the Commonwealth to ensure that its contribution is acknowledged in research publications by RTP students where related to the research project. The acknowledgement must include mention of the student's support through an "Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship".

An example acknowledgement statement would be, "This research is/was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship."

Section 7 - Guidelines

(44) Nil

Status and Details

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|----------------------------|--|
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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.