

RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM AND RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREE SCHOLARSHIPS POLICY AND PROCEDURE



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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy and procedure provides guidance on the Commonwealth-funded and University-funded scholarships for research higher degree (RHD) studies at CQUniversity.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to candidates enrolled in a RHD at CQUniversity.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 The University offers Commonwealth-funded and University-funded scholarships for applicants studying RHD at the University, who has a meritorious academic record and demonstrated research capability of a high standard.
- 3.2 RHD scholarships will be awarded that are consistent with the University's overall research strategy, particularly in relation to support of research strength areas, achieving research excellence with community impact, and alignment with the University's values.

RTP scholarships

- 3.3 Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarships are Commonwealth-funded postgraduate research scholarships in accordance with Section 46-10(b) of the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#) (Cwlth).
- 3.4 The RTP provides block grants, on a calendar year basis, to Higher Education Providers to support the research training of domestic and overseas students undertaking RHDs. Specifically, the RTP provides for:
- RTP Fees Offset Scholarships - allocated to students by way of satisfaction of their liability for RHD tuition fees
 - RTP Stipend Scholarships - to assist students with their living costs while undertaking an RHD, and
 - RTP Allowances - to assist students with ancillary costs of an RHD (refer to sections 3.23-3.25).
- 3.5 The University will regularly publish information about the total number of RTP Stipend Scholarships available for domestic and international candidates, respectively.

University-funded scholarships

- 3.6 The University may fund or co-fund other types of scholarships, including:
- CQUniversity Research Stipend Scholarship/s
 - CQUniversity Research Stipend Scholarship/s (Australian Indigenous)
 - CQUniversity Research Stipend Scholarship/s (Women's Career Interruption Award)
 - CQUniversity Research Top-Up Scholarship/s
 - CQUniversity Elevate Co-funded Industry Scholarships
 - CQUniversity Research Allowances Scholarship/s (for international candidates who are in receipt of a stipend scholarship)
 - CQUniversity Fees Offset Scholarship/s, also known as International Excellence Research Scholarships, (for international candidates only), and
 - other scholarships created through partnerships with industry or philanthropic organisations and donors.
- 3.7 Where University-funded awards are available by application, the University will publish information regarding the number and value of stipend scholarships, in conjunction with the call for scholarship applications.

Provisions for research scholarships and RHD places awarded previous to 2017

- 3.8 In January 2017, Australian Universities transitioned to the RTP, from the predecessor program known as the Research Training Scheme (RTS). Continuing University RHD candidates should note that:
- those who were who were enrolled under the RTS prior to 2017 will have their enrolment places continued, unaffected, with the balance of the existing tuition-free period available under the RTS being transitioned to an RTP Tuition Offset Scholarship, and
 - those who were in receipt of a stipend award that was previously supported through the RTS will be transitioned to the new conditions of award, as applicable for Stipend Scholarships, effective 1 January 2017 (relevant for previous Australian Postgraduate Award, International Postgraduate Research Award or International Postgraduate Research Scholarship holders).

- 3.9 Notwithstanding the provisions of section 3.8, the University will not consider requests to change the value of stipend payments (either Commonwealth or University-funded), where an offer has already been accepted prior to 1 January 2017. Please note this does not impact on regular indexation of the agreed base value of the scholarship will still occur, as per the [Conditions of Award](#) section below.
- 3.10 Continuing candidates may apply for any new awards advertised by the University, where all other eligibility criteria are met, and in accordance with this policy and procedure.

Supervision and facilities

- 3.11 Provisions for access to facilities and supervisors are as described in the relevant Course Rules as well as the [Research Higher Degree Supervision Policy and Procedure](#).

Conditions of award

Stipend scholarship values (payment rates)

- 3.12 The level of stipend payments will be in accordance with advice received from the [Department of Education](#) by 1 October each year. These rates are publicly available at <https://www.education.gov.au/research-training-program>. Scholarship recipients who have been approved for part-time study will receive a pro-rata stipend amount (50 per cent of the total value).
- 3.13 By default, all RTP Stipend Scholarships will be offered at the base rate.
- 3.14 The University may choose to contribute funds to provide for additional top-up scholarships only in exceptional circumstances, and with consideration of the following criteria:
- strategic alignment of the proposed research candidature with the University's research priority areas, as published by the University from time to time
 - academic excellence and/or quality of application against the order of merit criteria
 - special project or University requirements, and/or
 - support of applicants from under-represented groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women (especially in non-traditional disciplinary areas), people living with disability, people in regional and/or remote locations, and those from low socio-economic backgrounds.
- 3.15 On an as-needs basis, the Dean School of Graduate Research will make a determination with regard to the number and value of any top-up stipends, having regard to the items in section 3.14 above. Such scholarship/s will be advertised with the top-up stipend rate clearly indicated, together with any additional eligibility criteria that may apply.
- 3.16 A candidate in receipt of a stipend scholarship must not receive income from another source to support the student's general living costs, whilst undertaking their course of study, if that income is greater than 75 per cent of the stipend value. In applying this section, income unrelated to the student's 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 taken into account.
- 3.17 The applicable rate of payment must be agreed upon prior to commencement of the award. Once an offer of an award has been accepted by the candidate, the University will not consider requests to vary stipend rates beyond the originally agreed value. Note: this does not include a scholar who may relinquish an existing stipend award in order to transition to an award of higher value (e.g. moving from a base RTP Stipend, to an Indigenous or Women's award).
- 3.18 The RTP stipend value will be indexed annually by the Commonwealth. University-funded stipends will be indexed annually by the University unless otherwise described in the agreed schedule of award.
- 3.19 The stipend will be paid fortnightly and directly to the candidate through the University's payroll system. Such payment can only occur into an account in the candidate's name and with an Australian ADI code (as an authorised deposit-taking institution). The stipend commencement date will be the date of commencement of study, or in the case of a candidate who is already enrolled, on the date of acceptance of the Stipend Scholarship offer.

- 3.20 It is the responsibility of the candidate to assess the tax liability of their scholarship.
- 3.21 The University will not commence stipend payments to a candidate unless:
- they have commenced in the course of study
 - they have nominated an appropriate Australian banking institution in which payments can be deposited. As per item 3.19, stipend payments cannot be paid into a banking institution outside of Australia, and
 - for candidates where the source of scholarship funding is partly or fully funded by an external party, payments will not commence unless a fully executed research agreement is in place with the funding entity.
- 3.22 Stipend payments cannot be made to candidates who commence in offshore mode until the candidate has arrived in Australia and is active in the course of study. Scholarship recipients who commence in offshore mode will be eligible to accrue up to six months equivalent of stipend payments, claimable in retrospect once they have commenced their course of study in Australia. Scholarship benefits will be suspended for candidates who have commenced in offshore mode and have served more than six months in active candidature, and benefits will be recommenced only when the candidate has commenced active studies onshore in Australia. After suspension of stipend payments, candidates who remain offshore will forgo any benefits applicable for the duration that they remain in active candidature offshore, or they may choose to apply for leave of absence until they are able to commence the study in Australia.

Allowances

- 3.23 RTP allowances may be allocated to domestic RTP stipend recipients and University-funded allowances may be allocated to international University-funded stipend recipients. Allowances do not apply for international RTP stipend recipients. Where payable, allowances may cover the following items:
- for international candidates, a standard Overseas Student Health Cover policy approved by the Commonwealth [Department of Health and Aged Care](#) that the student, their spouse and/or eligible dependants for the period of the award, and
 - for either international or domestic candidates, costs associated with relocation to undertake a research degree in Australia.
- Relevant rates and conditions for the above allowances are as set out [Appendix A](#).
- As a hard copy submission of thesis is not a required part of the examination or conferral process, allowances will not be provided to cover RHD thesis printing and academic publication costs.
- 3.24 Recipients of an Allowance's Scholarship will be entitled to receive full reimbursement for eligible claims, up to the approved maximum amount. This includes reimbursement for any Goods and Services Tax amounts specified in the receipts provided.
- 3.25 A recipient who voluntarily relinquishes an Allowance or Stipend Scholarship within six months of commencement, or who has their candidature terminated within six months of commencement, may be required to refund all or part of any contribution by the University to the travel and/or relocation expenses incurred by the candidate in taking up the award. Such a termination would only occur as per the applicable Course Rules.
- 3.26 Allowances scholarships do not provide for:
- living allowances
 - expenses for personal travel (other than relocation)
 - the cost of English language testing, and/or
 - tuition fees for bridging programs or English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) programs.
- 3.27 Candidate Project Support Funds and Candidate Conference Travel Support Funds are separate monies made available to RHD candidates, and do not relate in any way to tuition offsets, stipend scholarships or allowances scholarships.

RTP fees offset scholarships

- 3.28 RTP Fees Offset Scholarships are available to eligible domestic candidates only. These Scholarships provide for the full costs of tuition liability for a RHD, for a specified course length (see section 3.29).

University fees offset scholarships

- 3.29 At the University's discretion, part or full University Fees Offset scholarships may be offered to international applicants of outstanding quality, to assist with meeting the costs of tuition liability for an RHD, for a specified course length (see section 3.29). Further information relating to CQUniversity Fees Offset Scholarships is provided in the [International Excellence Research Scholarships Guidelines](#).

Other student charges

- 3.30 The candidate will pay all other charges so levied by the University or the Commonwealth on the basis of being an RHD candidate. For domestic candidates, this will include the Student Services and Amenities fee, as this is not provided for under an RTP Fees Offset Scholarship.

Duration of award (period of support)

- 3.31 The duration of award for scholarships are as per the table below:

	Masters candidates	Doctoral candidates[^]	Extensions^{^^}
RTP Fees Offset	Maximum of 2 EFTSL	Maximum of 4 EFTSL	Strictly no extensions available
RTP Stipend (Commonwealth funded)	Maximum of 2 EFTSL	Maximum of 3 EFTSL	In exceptional circumstances, doctoral candidates may apply for a maximum of two extensions, of up to 0.5 EFTSL each. No extensions are available for Masters candidates.
RTP Allowances	Paid for the life of the applicable Stipend scholarship (including any approved extension).		
University-funded awards (including Women's and Australian Indigenous Awards)	Maximum of 2 EFTSL	Maximum of 3 EFTSL	In exceptional circumstances, doctoral candidates may apply for a maximum of two extensions, of up to 0.5 EFTSL each. No extensions are available for Masters candidates.
University-funded Allowances	Paid for the life of the applicable Stipend scholarship (including any approved extension).		
University-funded Top-Up Scholarships	Paid for the life of the applicable Stipend scholarship (including any approved extension).		
University-fees Offset Scholarships (International Excellence Research Scholarships)	Maximum of 2 EFTSL	Maximum of 3 EFTSL, or to match the Stipend Scholarship duration, whichever is the greater.	Strictly no extensions available

EFTSL = Equivalent Full-Time Student Load; 1 EFTSL = one year full time study.

[^] For Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Doctor of Education and Doctor of Professional Studies candidates only. PhD by Portfolio candidates are eligible to receive stipend support for one EFTSL only, and may apply for an extension of up to 0.25 EFTSL.

^{^^} This relates to extensions requested by the candidate, because of exceptional circumstances relating to the research and study program. Extensions relating to leave provisions are treated separately (please see sections 3.42-3.49).

- 3.32 For stipend scholarships (either RTP-funded or University-funded), the examination period will not be counted toward the EFTSL value. Stipend payments will not be made to students enrolled in examination mode. The examination unit does not attract a tuition cost.
- 3.33 The duration of any Stipend Scholarship (either RTP-funded or University-funded) will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken:
- towards the degree prior to the commencement of the Stipend Scholarship, or
 - towards the degree during suspension of the Stipend Scholarship (unless the study was undertaken overseas as part of a Commonwealth Government financially supported international postgraduate research scholarship or award).
- 3.34 Candidates who change course during their research degree may be subject to an adjusted duration of award. Please refer to sections 3.60-3.62 for more information.

Scholarship continuation and extensions

- 3.35 Scholarships will be renewed on an annual basis subject to the candidate maintaining satisfactory progress, as evidenced in candidature progress reports, and as per the conditions in the relevant Course Rules.
- 3.36 The University may approve an extension to the duration of a Stipend Scholarship (and any associated Allowances Scholarship) of up to 0.25 EFTSL (for PhD by Portfolio candidates) or up to 0.5 EFTSL (for all other doctoral candidates) provided that:
- the student is making satisfactory progress, and
 - the grounds for the extension relate to the research study and are beyond the control of the candidate.
- The EFTSL values listed above are the maximum period that will be considered for any one extension. Shorter durations will be considered as appropriate to the particular candidature and project.
- 3.37 Doctoral candidates (not including PhD by Portfolio) may apply for up to two extensions. These must be applied for separately. Granting of the first extension in no way guarantees a successful application for a second extension.
- 3.38 Masters candidates are not permitted to apply for stipend scholarship extensions.
- 3.39 Requests for an extension must be directed in writing to the Dean School of Graduate Research, and must clearly indicate support by the principal supervisor as well as endorsement by the Deputy Dean Research or RHD Academic Lead of the relevant School.
- 3.40 Requests for an extension must be received by the School of Graduate Research at least one month in advance of the current scholarship end date, to allow sufficient time for consideration of the request and to notify relevant University business areas responsible for processing payments, should the extension be approved. A request to extend a scholarship will not be considered if it is received after stipend payments have ceased.
- 3.41 Candidates who are in receipt of a scholarship and who lodge a complaint in relation to their course of study, supervision, or research environment will not be financially disadvantaged if their complaint is upheld and it relates to a serious breach of a University policy document. In this situation, available options to continue the scholarship must be identified (this will not include transfer of University funds to another institution).

Part-time study

- 3.42 A candidate may change from part-time to full-time study and vice versa in accordance with the [Research Higher Degree Course Rules](#), [Research Higher Degree \(Offshore\) Course Rules](#), and [Doctor of Philosophy by Portfolio Course Rules](#).
- 3.43 A candidate who is in receipt of an RTP or other Stipend Scholarship may be approved to receive a part-time Stipend Scholarship if the candidate has an acceptable reason related to caring commitments, a medical condition, a disability or other circumstance which limits the student's capacity to undertake full-time study for part or all of the course of study.

- 3.44 A candidate who has a part-time scholarship may revert to full-time study at any time with the permission of the University.

Leave

- 3.45 Candidates holding a Stipend Scholarship (either RTP-funded or University-funded) are entitled to receive:

- up to 20 working days' paid recreation leave for each year of the award, and
- up to 10 working days' paid sick leave for each year of the award.

These leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the scholarship but will be forfeited when the scholarship is terminated. If approved paid recreational leave or paid sick leave is taken, such periods will **not** extend the overall duration of award.

- 3.46 For periods of illness where the candidate has insufficient sick leave entitlements available under section 3.42, access to additional paid sick leave of up to a total of 12 weeks is possible during the Stipend Scholarship duration, provided that a satisfactory medical certificate has been provided by the candidate. Where periods of additional sick leave (beyond the standard 10 days) are taken, this will extend the duration of the scholarship.
- 3.47 Leave arrangements for RTP Stipend recipients studying on a part-time basis will be calculated pro-rata where periods are specified in working days in the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#) (Cwlth). For example, a part-time student on 0.5 EFTSL would be eligible for 10 days recreation leave and five days sick leave per annum.
- 3.48 Sick leave entitlements (including additional sick leave) may also be used to cover leave for candidates with family caring responsibilities.
- 3.49 Candidates who have completed 12 months of their award are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks paid maternity or paternity leave, where they are the primary caregiver following a childbirth or adoption occurring within the tenure of the award. Unpaid maternity or paternity leave may be accessed through the leave of absence provisions of the Course Rules. Where periods of maternity/paternity leave are taken, this will extend the duration of the scholarship. The maternity or paternity leave may not extend to candidates who are in receipt of a scholarship partly or fully funded by an industry partner.
- 3.50 Candidates who have completed 12 months of the tenure of the award are entitled to a duration of paid parental leave if they are the partner for a person who has a birth or adoptive event, and that event occurs during the Scholarship Stipend period. The duration of parental leave will be as per the terms available to employees under the [CQUniversity Enterprise Agreement](#). Parental leave may not extend to candidates who are in receipt of a scholarship partly or fully funded by an industry partner.
- 3.51 Where a candidate seeks paid or unpaid leave relating to adoption, an eligible application for leave must be supported by either:
- a statement from an adoption agency or other appropriate body of the presumed date of placement of the child with the candidate for adoption purposes, or
 - a statement from the appropriate government authority confirming that the candidate is to have custody of the child pending application for an adoption order.
- 3.52 The 12 month eligibility periods specified for maternity/paternity leave, adoption leave and parental leave are the same regardless of whether a student is studying on a full-time or part-time basis.
- 3.53 The duration of a scholarship will be increased by any periods of approved paid maternity/paternity leave, or approved additional paid sick leave (beyond the standard sick leave provisions). Multiple periods of short sick leave (less than 10 days duration) may not be accrued over the life of the award for the purposes of extending the scholarship duration.

Leave of absence

- 3.54 Approval may be given for up to 12 months' suspension of a Stipend Scholarship where an approved leave of absence has been granted to the candidate. Such periods of approved suspension will be added to the duration of the award, on recommencement of study.

Overseas study and research at other organisations

- 3.55 Candidates in receipt of RTP Stipend, Tuition Offset, or Allowance Scholarships may be permitted to undertake a portion of studies overseas, and/or to conduct research at organisations outside of the University on the condition that:
- the candidate maintains enrolment at the University
 - the overseas or off-campus component is approved by the Dean School of Graduate Research, having regard to appropriate resources, facilities and supervision, and
 - the candidate maintains satisfactory progress, as described in the applicable Course Rules.
- 3.56 3.56 Candidates intending to commence studies in offshore mode should refer to section 3.22 of this policy and procedure.

Scholarship suspension

- 3.57 An RTP Stipend, Tuition Offset or Allowances scholarship, or any University-funded scholarship, may be temporarily suspended:
- if the candidate is on an approved leave of absence (see section 3.48)
 - if the candidate has failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress
 - if the candidate has refused the existing supervision arrangements, and the University is unable to substitute an appropriate supervision arrangement, or
 - if the candidate is unable to fulfill the requirement to undertake their studies onshore in Australia.
- 3.58 Resumption of a scholarship following a period of suspension will only occur where:
- the candidate meets all eligibility criteria
 - appropriate supervision arrangements are in place, and
 - access to appropriate resources and facilities is available.

Scholarship termination

- 3.59 An RTP Stipend, Tuition Offset or Allowance scholarship, or any University-funded scholarship, will be terminated:
- at the end of the period of tenure of the award
 - on submission of the thesis
 - if the candidate has failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress
 - if the candidate ceases to be a full-time student and approval has not been obtained from the University to hold the Scholarship on a part-time basis
 - if the award holder does not resume study at the end of a period of suspension or approved leave of absence
 - if the candidate ceases to meet the eligibility criteria as specified in this policy and procedure, and/or
 - if the University determines that the candidate has committed serious research or behavioural misconduct.
- 3.60 If a scholarship is terminated, it cannot be re-activated unless the termination occurred in error.

Course transfers, upgrades and downgrades

- 3.61 University-funded scholarships of any description, and all scholarships underpinned by RTP funding allocated to the University, are not transferable to another institution.

- 3.62 Domestic candidates who transfer to the University from another institution where they were in receipt of an RTP Offset Scholarship, will be eligible to continue that Scholarship for the balance of their remaining candidature, taking into consideration any prior load consumption.
- 3.63 Continuation of Stipend, Top-Up and/or Allowances Scholarships for domestic or international candidates who transfer to the University from another institution will occur only where the University agrees to accept financial responsibility for the award. Such agreement must be made prior to the candidate's commencement.
- 3.64 An RTP, Women's or Australian Indigenous Award scholarship recipient who commences as a research masters candidate, but transfers to doctoral candidature prior to the expiry of the masters-level award, will receive a scholarship extension to the standard doctoral timelines (minus any candidature time already consumed).
- 3.65 A scholarship recipient who commences as a doctoral candidate, but transfers to masters candidature, will have their tuition offset, stipend and/or allowances scholarship benefits continued only to the full extent of the award duration for masters candidates. Candidates who change from doctoral to masters candidature later than two EFTSL into candidature should therefore seek advice about possible tuition liability prior to applying for change of course.
- 3.66 Where scholarships are funded from industry partnerships or other external parties, funded extensions to candidature due to a course upgrade or an approved extension to the study period, will only be provided for if explicitly covered in the conditions of award specific to that scholarship.
- 3.67 Where a scholarship recipient undertakes a substantive change of topic (as described in the [Research Higher Degrees Change of Topic and/or Course Policy and Procedure](#)), the continuation of a Stipend Scholarship (either RTP-funded, or University-funded) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. A candidate who undertakes a substantive change of topic will require the approval of the Dean School of Graduate Research to be eligible for continuation of any scholarship benefits.

Undertaking other study whilst in receipt of a scholarship

- 3.68 As per the relevant Course Rules, candidates are not permitted to engage in any academic course of study leading to a qualification which is not an essential part of the award recipient's current degree, unless with prior approval from the Dean School of Graduate Research. Candidates who undertake such studies without permission may be asked to relinquish their award.

Participation in employment whilst in receipt of a scholarship

- 3.69 As per the relevant Course Rules, candidates who are in receipt of a Tuition Offset, Stipend Scholarship, Top-up Scholarship or Allowances Scholarship may participate in forms of paid or unpaid employment, voluntary positions or other duties, provided that this does not impede satisfactory academic progress.

Participation in additional research activities whilst in receipt of a scholarship

- 3.70 Candidates must seek approval from the University, through the Dean School of Graduate Research, prior to undertaking research activities that are additional to the course of study as prescribed in the description of candidature. Examples of such research activities may include industry placements, research internships, professional practice or other specific research enrichment activities (e.g. fellowships or residences).
- 3.71 A formal agreement about the timeline to undertake the activity, the duties that the activity will involve, and the date on which usual RHD candidature will resume, must be in place prior to the activity commencing.
- 3.72 Arrangements for the continuation, suspension or extension of a scholarship relating to the period of additional research activity will be considered on a case by case basis, having regard to:
- whether the candidate continues to be actively enrolled during the activity
 - whether the research activity is directly related to the candidate's program of research and study, and/or
 - the extent to which the activity can be demonstrated to improve the employability and/or graduate skills and attributes of the candidate.

- 3.73 RTP Offset scholarship candidates may have their scholarship extended by the duration of an additional research activity up to the maximum period of RTP support.
- 3.74 University Offset Scholarship candidates may have their scholarship extended by the duration of an additional research activity up to the maximum period of the University Offset Scholarship support.
- 3.75 Candidates who are in receipt of an RTP or other Stipend Scholarship may be approved to continue to receive their Stipend Scholarship during the period of additional research activity on a case by case basis, with consideration given to whether:
- the candidate already holds an RTP or another Stipend Scholarship
 - the candidate is not to receive other income associated with these activities
 - the maximum duration of the course has not been reached, and
 - the candidate has not yet submitted their thesis for examination.
- 3.76 The Dean School of Graduate Research reserves the right to suspend or discontinue a scholarship if the candidate does not fulfil the expectations of the agreed research activity, or does not return to research candidature by the agreed date.

4 PROCEDURE

Eligibility

General eligibility

- 4.1 To be eligible for an stipend scholarship (of any type), a candidate must not be receiving income from another source to support the candidate's general living costs while undertaking their course of study if that income is greater than 75 per cent of the candidate's RTP Stipend rate. Income unrelated to the candidate's course of study or income received for the candidate's course of study but not for the purposes of supporting general living costs is not taken into account.
- 4.2 To be eligible for a Fees Offset award, a candidate must not be receiving an equivalent award of scholarship from the Commonwealth or other provider, designed to offset RHD fees.

RTP scholarship eligibility

- 4.3 In accordance with the Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2017 (Cwth), to be eligible for an RTP Scholarship a candidate must be a domestic candidate or an overseas candidate enrolled in an accredited RHD course of study at an Australian higher education provider.

University scholarship eligibility

- 4.4 The following additional criteria apply to the University Research Stipend Award/s made available for specified equity groups:
- the Women's Career Interruption Award is offered to a female candidate who can demonstrate significant interruption to their academic careers as a result of carer's responsibilities and/or being the primary carer of a dependent child. A significant career interruption is typically defined as a period of not less than five years in total (although this may be discontinuous), during which the individual has reduced capacity to pursue studies, employment and/or professional activities relating to the research field of interest.
 - the Australian Indigenous Award is offered to a candidate who identifies as, and demonstrates community acceptance as, an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. To satisfy this eligibility criteria, applicants will need to provide documentation consistent with the [Confirmation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander/First Nations Identity Protocol](#).

Award of scholarships

- 4.5 RTP Tuition Offset Scholarships will be automatically offered to domestic candidates who commence an RTP-eligible RHD, except those studying the PhD by Portfolio. This includes domestic candidates who may be studying outside Australia for part or all of their research degree, as well as eligible candidates transferring from other institutions. An application for an RTP Tuition Offset scholarship is not required.
- 4.6 International RHD candidates awarded an RTP Stipend will be automatically offered an International Excellence Research Scholarship, which will extinguish the candidate's tuition liability for up to three EFTSL. A separate application process does not apply.
- 4.7 International Excellence Research Scholarships may be offered to international candidates who do not hold a stipend scholarship, subject to availability of part or full-tuition scholarships within the University at time of commencement. This Scholarship may fully or partially extinguish the candidate's tuition liability and the amount of a Tuition Offset will be advised with a Letter of Offer. Applications for International Excellence Research Scholarships must be made by the principal supervisor (see section 4.23).
- 4.8 RTP and University-funded Allowances are provided to eligible candidates in receipt of a Stipend Scholarship. A separate application process does not apply.
- 4.9 Scholarship applicants must meet the relevant entry requirements of the RHD course relating to their scholarship, including English language proficiency requirements, where stated.
- 4.10 Current RHD candidates, or those transferring from another institution, are not eligible to receive a Stipend Scholarship if they have already completed student load in excess of the maximum period of support available for each award. These above timelines are as calculated as at the commencement date of the award, and based on the standard course length as described in the applicable Course Rules.

Application timelines and format

- 4.11 A description of the number of awards available will be published on the University website. Eligible applicants will be invited by the School of Graduate Research to complete the pro forma Scholarship cover sheet, during the Application for Admission process.
- 4.12 For scholarships with a specific deadline for submissions, the University will not consider scholarship applications that are incomplete or received after the advertised closing date.
- 4.13 At its discretion, the University may call for and/or award, applications for various University-funded scholarships at any time of year.
- 4.14 A summary of the application process for different awards, based on the applicant's mode of enrolment, is provided in the table below:

	Domestic Candidates	International Candidates	Application Process
RTP Fees Offset Scholarship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	None required; automatically applies to domestic candidates who are offered admission
RTP Stipend	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	By application to invited applicants
RTP Allowances	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	None required; automatically applies to domestic candidates who are awarded an RTP Stipend
University-funded awards (including Women's and Australian Indigenous Awards)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	By application
University-funded Allowances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None required; automatically applies to international candidates who are awarded a stipend scholarship (of any type)

University-funded Top-Up Stipends	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	By application
International Excellence Research Scholarships – where the candidate has already been offered a Stipend Scholarship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None required; eligible international candidates will have the award automatically applied.

- 4.15 Applications for all scholarships will be open on a year-round basis, except those in the Special Award stream (Women's, Indigenous, and industry or project-linked scholarship types).
- 4.16 For scholarships where an application process is indicated, an application should be lodged:
- for new to the University candidates, concurrently with the final-stage application for admission documentation, or
 - for existing University candidates, an application can be lodged at any time after the successful completion of the Confirmation of Candidature milestone, via a notification from the principal supervisor to the School of Graduate Research.
- 4.17 Only complete applications, with required documentation appended, will be considered. Applicants who have CQUniversity transcripts need not supply official copies, but it is the applicant's responsibility to supply unofficial transcripts.
- 4.18 An eligible scholarship application must be submitted on the pro forma provided by the School of Graduate Research, and must have endorsement from the applicant's principal supervisor and either the Deputy Dean Research or Postgraduate Research Coordinator for the relevant School. Applications that do not have endorsement from both these parties may be considered eligible for consideration only via special approval by the Dean School of Graduate Research.
- 4.19 A principal supervisor may endorse no more than two applicants for RTP and/or University stipend awards, in any 12 month period. Stipend awards available in other streams (including Women's, Indigenous and industry-funded awards) are not counted towards this cap.
- 4.20 A principal supervisor should only endorse an application where they believe that
- the applicant's track record and future potential would be ranked within the top 5 per cent of scholars in their disciplinary field, and
 - the scholarship application is likely to achieve 85 per cent or more of available points in the Scholarship Assessment Scale.
- 4.21 A principal supervisor who endorses an applicant who then fails to achieve 75 per cent or more of the available assessment points may be required to undergo professional development prior to being permitted to make further endorsements.
- 4.22 Applications for an International Fees Offset Scholarship may only be lodged by the principal supervisor. Refer to the International Excellence Research Scholarships Guideline for more information.
- 4.23 The cap on maximum number of applicants per 12 month period relates to the principal supervisor only and is not influenced by other members of the supervision team.
- 4.24 An applicant who is unsuccessful in first attempt may resubmit one further application for consideration (for the same award). If this is unsuccessful, a 12 month waiting period applies before this applicant will be eligible to make further submissions.
- 4.25 An applicant who is made an offer of scholarship must commence studies within six months of the date of scholarship offer. An appropriate commencement arrangement will be communicated to the candidate at time of offering the award (for example, a requirement to commence onshore in Australia). Where circumstances prevent the candidate from commencing within six months, a deferment of up to a further six months may be granted by the Dean School of Graduate Research. A scholarship will be relinquished if the applicant is unable to commence studies within 12 months from the date of scholarship offer.

Process for awarding of stipend scholarships

- 4.26 The Scholarship Review Panel will consider merit-based scholarship applications on an as-needs basis during the year. This Panel will comprise:
- Dean School of Graduate Research
 - representation of each academic School from which applications have been received, and
 - at least one representative from a School that is unrelated to the applications received.
- Typically, the Schools will be represented by the Deputy Dean Research or Postgraduate Research Coordinator. In the event of a conflict of interest amongst the panellists, the Dean School of Graduate Research or Vice-President (Research) may appoint another appropriate senior researcher.
- 4.27 The Scholarship Review Panel may be joined by ad hoc members from time to time, appropriate to the award being considered (for example, for the Women's and Indigenous-specific awards).
- 4.28 The Coordinator RHD (or their nominee), will provide administrative assistance to the Scholarship Review Panel.
- 4.29 RTP and University Stipend Scholarships will be awarded on a competitive process, based on the merit of the applicant, alignment of the proposed project with areas of University strategic interest, and quality of the proposed research environment (including supervision).
- 4.30 Full details of the Scholarship Assessment Scale used to determine merit of each application are provided in [Appendix B](#).
- 4.31 In determining the merit of each application, the Scholarship Review Panel will also have regard to the candidate's research skills and outputs, relative to opportunity. As such, only in extraordinary cases would an applicant who has previously completed a RHD be considered as having high-merit if the nominated course of study is of an equal or lower level in the Australian Qualifications Framework, compared with the level of award already completed.
- 4.32 The Scholarship Review Panel will conduct scoring of all applicants and providing ranking information to the School of Graduate Research to inform deliberations for recommendation of award.
- 4.33 The Scholarship Review Panel will form a consensus view on the score achieved by each applicant. Only applicants that achieve a score of at least 85 per cent of the available marks will be considered for allocation of an award. Where more than one applicant achieves the 85 per cent benchmark, the Scholarship Review Panel may award a scholarship to the most meritorious candidate.
- 4.34 Feedback will be provided both to the applicant and the principal supervisor in relation to the assessment outcome for unsuccessful candidates.

Establishing first class honours or equivalent

- 4.35 In conjunction with the Scholarship Assessment Scale ([Appendix B](#)), an applicant will meet the following minimum competitive selection criteria:
- have completed a Bachelor Degree with First Class Honours, or be regarded by the University as having an equivalent level of attainment, and
 - be undertaking, or approved for admission and enrolling in, a RHD program at the University.
- 4.36 Only applicants who have successfully completed a first class honours degree will be deemed to have demonstrated the necessary competitive standards of academic merit and research capability appropriate for the award of a scholarship. It is recognised, however, that not all research careers are based on the traditional path of an initial honours degree. Provision is made, therefore, to establish honours equivalency for those applicants who might have a less traditional academic/scholarly background and/or who can demonstrate strong research capability in their field.
- 4.37 Applicants for University-funded equity scholarships, such as women's and Australian Indigenous specified awards may be exempted from the requirement to demonstrate first class honours or equivalent.

- 4.38 First class honours applicants will provide certified documentation evidencing completion one of the following:

Qualification title	Minimum course requirement	Minimum assessment requirement
Bachelor Degree with end-on Honours year	Successful completion of a Bachelor Degree plus an Honours Degree	Honours 1 level
Australian or New Zealand Bachelor Degree	Successful completion of a four year Bachelor Degree with Honours	Honours 1 level
Australian or New Zealand Research Masters Degree (66-100% research component)	Formally graded	Honours 1 level

- 4.39 If an applicant does not hold one of the above qualifications but has qualifications and/or research experience equivalent to a first class honours degree, the scholarship applicant can be assessed for first class honours equivalence.
- 4.40 Applicants holding one or more of the following qualifications require such assessment:
- Bachelor degree with not less than 75 per cent as the highest qualification
 - completed Masters degree by coursework (normally with a grade of not less than 75 per cent) and where the research component comprises a minimum duration of six months
 - completed postgraduate qualification (normally with not less than 75 per cent or equivalent and equivalent to one year full-time) plus three years full-time research experience in an appropriately supervised research environment, or three refereed research publications (including co-authored publications) highly relevant to the proposed research topic, and/or
 - non-standard qualifications.

Evidence of results

- 4.41 When establishing qualifications as first class honours or first class honours equivalent, it is expected that all the requirements for the award of degree will have been completed. In cases where final results are unavailable to the Scholarship review panel, conditional offers of award may be made.
- 4.42 Certified copies of results or academic transcripts are required as evidence of the successful completion of the most recent and relevant degree. If final results are not available, a letter from the head of program, school or department indicating that the degree is in progress and what the anticipated final result will be is acceptable. Final results shall be submitted at the first opportunity.

Conflict of interest

- 4.43 A conflict of interest will be deemed to exist where a Scholarship Review Panel member is an applicant's present or proposed supervisor, or in such other cases where there is a direct personal or professional affiliation with an applicant. Members must declare their conflict of interest to the Committee Chair and abstain from any discussion of the applicant in question.

Appeals

- 4.44 Unsuccessful applicants who believe they have reasonable grounds for dissatisfaction with any aspect of the selection procedure may request a re-evaluation of their original scholarship application. Such a request should be made in writing and submitted to the Dean School of Graduate Research not more than 28 days after the date shown on the formal advice of the outcome of the selection procedure.
- 4.45 An applicant who is not satisfied with the re-evaluation of their Scholarship outcome, or with any other formal decision made in respect to the conditions of award, may appeal the decision by submitting a request to the Academic Appeals Committee in accordance with the grounds for appeal, timelines and processes in the [Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#).

- 4.46 The University recognises the importance of providing prompt and fair complaint resolution and academic appeal procedures for candidates, without victimisation for initiating or participating in the settlement. The candidate's enrolment will be maintained while the appeal process is underway.

Complaints

- 4.47 Applicants who have a complaint may make a complaint in accordance with the [Complaints Policy and Procedure](#).

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

Obligations of candidates

- 5.1 Scholarship recipients are required to notify the School of Graduate Research within seven days, in writing, if:
- the candidate leaves Australia for reasons other than for approved overseas study, approved suspension or approved recreation leave
 - the candidate discontinues full-time study in their research program and is not approved for part-time study, and/or
 - the candidate is absent for any reason for a period of 14 days or longer from the candidate's place of study, except on approved leave.
- 5.2 An award recipient will conform to the regulations (including disciplinary provisions) of the University, including all applicable course rules relating to their enrolment, relevant legislation on human and animal experimentation, and the expectations of the University in relation to ethical clearances, management of health and safety risks, and research data management.
- 5.3 Recipients of any form of scholarship under the RTP must include explicit acknowledgement of the Commonwealth's contribution, when publishing or producing material such as books, articles, newsletters or other literary or artistic works which relate to the research project carried out with the support of the RTP Scholarship. This includes work generated at any time during or after completion of the research degree. The appropriate wording for this acknowledgement is as follows: 'This research was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship'.

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 5.4 The relevant Course Rules for RHD, together with the Research Higher Degree Supervision Policy and Procedure, outlines the responsibilities of the University, Schools and supervisors with respect to RHD candidates.
- 5.5 The Dean School of Graduate Research and Coordinator RHD, are responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing and ensuring compliance with this policy and procedure.

Reporting

- 5.6 The School of Graduate Research shall provide annual reports to the Research Committee regarding the allocation of RHD scholarships, and compliance with this policy and procedure.

Records management

- 5.7 The School of Graduate Research is responsible for records management.
- 5.8 Employees must manage records in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping information system.
- 5.9 University records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the relevant [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#). Before disposing of any records, approval must be sought from the Records and Privacy Team (email records@cqu.edu.au).

6 DEFINITIONS

6.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

7 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#)

[Australian Qualifications Framework](#)

[Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#) (Cwltth)

[Complaints Policy and Procedure](#)

[Doctor of Philosophy by Portfolio Course Rules](#)

[Higher Education Support Act 2003](#) (Cwltth)

[International Excellence Research Scholarships Guideline](#)

[Research Higher Degrees Change of Topic and/or Course Policy and Procedure](#)

[Research Higher Degree \(Offshore\) Course Rules](#)

[Research Higher Degree Course Rules](#)

[Research Higher Degree Supervision Policy and Procedure](#)

8 FEEDBACK

8.1 Feedback about this document can be emailed to policy@cqu.edu.au.

9 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Delegated Approval Authority	Research Committee
Advisory Committee	N/A
Required Consultation	N/A
Administrator	Dean School of Graduate Research
Next Review Date	29/04/2024

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	Executive Committee of Academic Board 26/06/2017
Amendment Authority and Date	Research Higher Degrees Committee 23/08/2017; Typographical Amendments 01/09/2017; Research Higher Degrees Committee 28/06/2018; Research Higher Degrees Committee 07/11/2019; Dean, School of Graduate Research 15/11/2019; Dean, School of Graduate Research 14/04/2020; Research Committee 11/11/2020; Research Committee 29/04/2021; Dean School of Graduate Research 27/05/2023.
Notes	This document consolidates and replaces International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) – 2015 Conditions of Award Procedure, University Postgraduate Research Awards (UPRA) – 2015 Conditions of Award Procedure, Establishing Order of Merit – Postgraduate Research Scholarships Procedure, International Postgraduate Research Award (IPRA) – 2015 Conditions of Award Procedure and Australian Postgraduate Research Awards (APA) – 2015 Conditions of Award Procedure.

10 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Maximum rates and conditions when claiming allowances

Overseas health cover (OSHC)

- 10.1 The [Department of Home Affairs](#) requires overseas students to maintain OSHC for the duration of time they are in Australia. OSHC is insurance to assist international students meet the costs of medical and hospital care that they may need while in Australia. OSHC will also pay limited benefits for pharmaceuticals and ambulance services.
- 10.2 Where provided for within the scholarship terms, a candidate may request the University to contribute to the cost of their OSHC in one of three categories: independent, couple or family-level cover. The University will agree to fund the level of cover that is relevant to the candidate's personal circumstances that apply at the time of commencing the degree, and the entire policy is purchased at course commencement. If, during the term of candidature, there is a change to the candidate's personal situation that requires a change in the level of cover (e.g. marriage triggering the need for couple-cover, or birth of a child triggering the need for family-level cover), the candidate will be personally responsible for any additional OSHC costs that may be incurred. The University will not agree to pay for upgrades in cover, or to switch OSHC to another provider.
- 10.3 The cost of overseas health cover varies across different insurers, their policies, the type of cover required and the duration of cover. The maximum amount that the University will provide in allowances for OHSC shall not exceed the quoted premium with the University's preferred supplier, at time of purchase.

Relocation expenses

- 10.4 The maximum allowance available for relocation expenses is \$AU500 for applicant, \$AU500 for a partner, and up to \$AU250 per dependent child, up to a maximum of \$AU1,400 total claim.
- 10.5 Relocation allowances are not payable for travel undertaken after completion of studies, or after termination of the Allowances or Stipend award.
- 10.6 An eligible claim for relocation allowance is a claim made by the scholarship recipient for the cost of relocating themselves, their spouse and dependants to a new place of residence to enable the student to undertake their RHD. A claim for relocation allowance is not an eligible claim unless the relocation distance is greater than 50 kilometres, and where maintaining the former place of residence would have been a significant impediment to undertaking the RHD.
- 10.7 A claim for relocation allowance is not an eligible claim unless
- it is a claim for the cost of air travel, travel by car or removal expenses to the new place of residence, and
 - the candidate has produced complete receipts for the claim.

Appendix B: Scholarship assessment scale

- 10.8 A Scholarship Assessment Scale using three categories of performance will be used to inform the allocation of scholarships to eligible applicants, as follows:

Academic achievement and writing skills (0 – 20 points)

- 10.9 A score for academic achievement will be assigned based on the applicant's academic transcript and/or evidence of other scholarly achievements. This will include a determination in relation to whether the applicant has satisfied the criteria for First Class Honours or equivalent (refer sections 4.34-4.39).
- 10.10 Points may also be assigned for the applicant's writing skills, as demonstrated throughout the application and through samples of peer-reviewed publications or other relevant materials produced by the applicant. Where multiple authors/contributors exist on publications or other works, the applicant must provide a statement of the contribution made by that individual.
- 10.11 The Scholarship Review Panel may disregard co-authored works unless the applicant's contribution to developing and writing the work is made clear.

Quality of research project and alignment with CQUniversity research priority areas (0 – 15 points)

- 10.12 The application must include details of their proposed research topic, including the research question and method/s by which they plan to study it. This proposal will be considered with regard to the overall feasibility of the project (having regards to timelines and resourcing) and appropriateness to the degree program being applied for.
- 10.13 In addition, applicants must provide a short statement describing their knowledge of the University's current research priority areas (as published from time to time) and research environment, and how their proposed research will contribute to research outputs and research culture in these areas.
- 10.14 For this criterion, marks may be awarded for one or both of demonstrated achievement and/or proven potential to be an outstanding research applicant.

Evidence of motivation, research experience and research environment (0 – 15 points)

- 10.15 Evidence of motivation should be demonstrated by providing a statement of research philosophy including what research questions are of interest as well as why the applicant is intending to undertake an RHD and what their long term career goals are.
- 10.16 Research experience and/or research impact should be demonstrated by providing evidence of relevant research activity such as a published piece of work in a peer-reviewed outlet (e.g. journal, conference paper, book or book chapter), a research-based thesis (such as an honours or masters by research thesis), a protected design/software, a recorded performance/exhibition of creative painted, drawn or sculpted work, and providing a statement of contribution. The applicant must provide a statement of contribution where multiple authors/contributors exist.
- 10.17 Alternatively, research experience can be demonstrated through recent and relevant professional experience relating to the field of proposed study, including paid employment or voluntary positions that include research-relevant duties.
- 10.18 In judging research experience, the assessors will have regard to the track record of the applicant relative to opportunity.
- 10.19 Assessors should also make due consideration that research expertise and potential can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, as appropriate to disciplinary expectations. Guidance on appropriate ways to demonstrate outstanding quality is provided in [Appendix C](#).
- 10.20 Evidence of research linkages should be demonstrated by a statement describing a sustained working relationship with the proposed research supervisors.

10.21 In addition, a cover page should be submitted by the proposed principal supervisor, describing how the applicant and project will contribute to the University's research priorities and/or research activities being undertaken in their School/discipline area (300 words maximum). The supervisory panel must also provide relevant information about the track record of the proposed supervisors in relation to RHD degree training (e.g. timely completions) and research outputs (500 words maximum).

Appendix C: Reference table for scholarship assessment scale

Criteria	Notes	Out Of (Benchmark)	Score Given
Academic Achievement and Writing Skills	<p>Refer to evidence provided in certified academic transcripts, noting whether applicants demonstrate first class honours or equivalent. Academic achievement may span both coursework and research-based qualifications, as appropriate to the disciplinary field.</p> <p>Writing skills demonstrated throughout the application and in works appended to the application works, including descriptions of creative works.</p>	20 (17)	
Quality of Proposal and Alignment with Research Priority Areas	<p>Embedded within the application should be a research proposal, plus a statement from the applicant describing their knowledge of the University's current research priority areas, and how their proposed research will contribute to research outputs and research culture in these areas.</p> <p>For this criterion, marks may be awarded for one or both of demonstrated achievement and/or proven potential to be an outstanding research applicant.</p>	15 (12.75)	
Evidence of Research Experience, Motivation and Research Environment	<p>Evidence provided of relevant research activity AND the relative contribution of the applicant if there have been multiple contributors. Evidence can include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peer reviewed outputs (e.g. journal articles, books, book chapters, conference papers) 2. Software or protected design 3. Recorded performance or exhibition of creative work. 4. Professional esteem measures (e.g. invited or keynote presentations and exhibitions), that demonstrate research expertise and potential <p>Periods of research-relevant employment, either paid or unpaid, will also attract points.</p> <p>A statement within the application of the applicant's research philosophy including what research questions are of interest, why the applicant is undertaking the RHD, and their long term career goals.</p> <p>A statement demonstrating sustained working relationships with the proposed supervisors (including where these supervisors are from disparate disciplinary fields).</p> <p>A statement from the proposed principal supervisor, describing how the candidate and project fits with existing research activities and priorities.</p> <p>Information about the proposed supervisory team's track record in research higher degree training and research outputs.</p> <p>In awarding points for this criterion, the Panel will have regard to an applicant's track record, relative to opportunity.</p>	15 (12.75)	
TOTAL		50	
TOTAL MINIMUM BENCHMARK (85% of available marks)		42.5	