Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Stipend Scholarship

Conditions of Award for Continuing Recipients

From 1 January 2017, support provided by the Research Training Scheme (RTS), Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA) and the International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) will be replaced with the Research Training Program (RTP). Students supported under the RTS, APA or IPRS schemes, will be transitioned to equivalent funding under the Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP).

Research students awarded an RTP Stipend Scholarship in 2017 or those supported by an APA prior to 1 January 2017, should refer to this document for their stipend benefits and conditions.

Purpose

1.1 Research Training Program (RTP) Stipend Scholarships are awarded to applicants of exceptional research potential undertaking a Higher Degree by Research (HDR). RTP Stipend Scholarships are provided to assist with general living costs through the provision of a stipend.

1.2 RTP Stipend Scholarships are governed by the Federal Government’s Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research).

Eligibility

1.3 To be eligible for an RTP Stipend Scholarship, an applicant must:
   a. be enrolled, or seeking to enrol, as a full-time candidate in a Higher Degree by Research course at the University; and
   b. be an Australian or New Zealand citizen; or an Australian permanent resident; or an international student eligible to study in Australia on an international student visa.

1.4 An RTP Stipend Scholarship will not be awarded to a candidate who is in receipt of an equivalent award, scholarship or salary providing a benefit greater than 75% of the stipend rate to undertake the HDR course. Income earned from sources 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 subject to the 75% rule.

Selection

1.5 Selection of the RTP Stipend Scholarship recipients will be undertaken by the University Research Scholarships Committee on the basis of academic merit and research potential.

1.6 Strategic priority may be given to certain groups of students as part of the assessment and selection process, as determined by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research & Innovation.

1.7 Application, selection and offer processes for RTP scholarships are detailed in the HDR Scholarship Application and Assessment Procedures.
**Commencement**

1.8  Recipients must accept both a place in the Higher Degree by Research course as well as the scholarship by the date specified in the offer letters.

**Stipend rate**

1.9  The annual rate of the RTP Stipend Scholarship will be at least the minimum full-time rate published for the relevant RTP Grant Year and indexed annually in accordance with the Higher Education Support Act 2003. The level of the stipend will not be reduced during the period of the award and will be published each year on the University of Canberra website.

1.10  The stipend rate for full-time candidates will be detailed in the scholarship offer letter.

**Duration**

1.11  The duration of a full-time RTP Stipend Scholarship is three years for a candidate undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy course.

1.12  The duration of an RTP Stipend Scholarship will be reduced by any period of study undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the RTP Stipend Scholarship (including study undertaken towards a Master by Research course if the student has upgraded to PhD), or any period the candidate was in receipt of an RTP Stipend Scholarship at this institution or elsewhere.

1.13  Periods of University-approvemed leave as prescribed in these conditions will extend the end date of the RTP Stipend Scholarship by the number of days approved (see Paid Leave Entitlements and Unpaid Leave).

1.14  Scholarship recipients are expected to notify Graduate Research of any changes to their candidature as soon as they are known, to avoid overpayment of the stipend. Scholarship recipients will be required to repay any stipend payments to which they were not entitled.

**Part-time study (domestic recipients only)**

1.15  The University may approve a part-time stipend for a domestic recipient only if the recipient has exceptional circumstances.

1.16  For the purpose of part-time study, the University must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances relate to significant caring commitments or health condition, including:

   a. being the primary carer of a pre-school child;
   b. being the primary carer of a school-aged child and a sole parent with limited access to outside support;
   c. being the primary carer for an invalid or disabled spouse, child or parent;
   d. the recipient has a health condition which makes full-time enrolment impossible or unreasonably onerous (appropriate documentation relevant to the condition is required); or
   e. other exceptional circumstance assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Academic Director.
Graduate Research.

1.17 Stipends for part-time stipend scholarships are not tax exempt.

1.18 If a scholarship recipient is approved to undertake their HDR course part-time, their part-time scholarship will be 50 per cent of the full-time stipend rate.

1.19 A scholarship recipient approved to study part-time may revert to full-time study at any time with the permission of the University. Approval for part-time enrolment only applies while the circumstances specified in the application remain in effect. Information on transferring from full-time to part-time and vice versa is detailed in the *Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Changes to Candidature Policy*.

**Paid leave entitlements**

1.20 The duration of the *RTP Stipend Scholarship* will be extended by periods of approved leave, as specified below.

1.21 All leave entitlement will be forfeited once the scholarship has ended.

**Sick Leave**

1.22 *RTP Stipend Scholarship* recipients may take up to 10 working days paid sick leave a year within the tenure of the award and this may be accrued over the duration.

1.23 Sick leave of less than 10 working days is managed within the recipient’s host Faculty or Research Institute and does not require the submission of a formal leave application form. The end date of the scholarship will not be extended for periods of sick leave less than 10 working days.

1.24 Recipients may also receive additional paid sick leave of up to a total of 12 weeks during the duration of the *RTP Stipend Scholarship* for medically substantiated periods of illness lasting longer than 10 working days.

1.25 Applications for additional sick leave must be submitted via the *Application for Leave from Candidature Form* to Graduate Research and must have the Primary Supervisor’s endorsement and the approval of the Associate Dean Research in the Faculty or Director in the Research Institute.

1.26 If sick leave is approved, the *RTP Stipend Scholarship* recipient’s end date will be extended by the number of days leave taken. Sick leave entitlements may also be used to cover recipients with family responsibilities for caring for sick children or relatives upon presentation of appropriate documentation relevant to the condition.

1.27 Sick leave claims must be made within 30 days of the end of the period of illness and appropriate documentation relevant to the condition must be provided to Graduate Research within three weeks of the leave request.
Recreation leave

1.28 RTP Stipend Scholarship recipients are entitled to 20 working days paid recreation leave for each year of the award and this may be accrued over the tenure of the award. Any unused leave remaining when an award is terminated or completed will be forfeited.

1.29 Recreation leave is managed within the recipient’s host Faculty or Research Institute and does not require the submission of a formal leave application form. The end date of the scholarship will not be extended for periods of recreation leave.

Maternity or Parenting Leave

1.30 RTP Stipend Scholarship recipients who have completed 12 months of their award are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks (60 working days) paid maternity leave during the tenure of their award. Paid maternity leave may also be approved if a recipient has adopted a child.

1.31 RTP Stipend Scholarship recipients who are partners of women giving birth and who have completed 12 months of their award are entitled to a period of 10 working days paid parenting leave at the time of the birth (to be taken during the period one week before the birth and up to five weeks after the birth of the child).

1.32 A medical certificate including the anticipated date of birth must be submitted to Graduate Research at least six weeks before leave is planned.

1.33 Applications for parental leave must be submitted via the Application for Leave from Candidature Form to Graduate Research and must have the Primary Supervisor’s endorsement and the approval of the Associate Dean Research in the Faculty or Director in the Research Institute.

1.34 If parental leave is approved, the RTP Stipend Scholarship recipient’s end date will be extended by the number of days leave taken.

1.35 Recipients who have not completed 12 months of their award may access unpaid maternity leave through the award’s suspension provision.

Unpaid Leave

1.36 An RTP Stipend Scholarship will be suspended during approved intermission or unpaid leave from candidature.

1.37 In the case of a recipient who is studying on an international student visa, any temporary suspension of enrolment must be in accordance with the relevant sections of the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 (the National Code 2007) established under the Educational Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (the ESOS Act 2000).

1.38 RTP Stipend Scholarship recipients may apply for a temporary suspension of their scholarship for a period totalling up to twelve months. In exceptional circumstances only (circumstances beyond the recipient’s control), recipients may apply for suspensions beyond 12 months.
1.39 If intermission from study and suspension of scholarship are approved, an RTP Stipend Scholarship recipient’s end date will be adjusted and increased by the number of days leave taken.

1.40 All applications for leave without stipend must be submitted via the Application for Leave from Candidature Form to the HDR Support Team and must have the Primary Supervisor’s endorsement and the approval of the Associate Dean Research in the Faculty or Director in the Research Institute.

1.41 RTP Stipend Scholarship recipients must notify the HDR Support Team at least three weeks prior to resuming study following a period of intermission from study.

1.42 RTP Stipend Scholarship recipients who suspend their studies without notifying the HDR Support Team through the process of applying for intermission will be required to repay any scholarship payments to which they were not entitled.

**Allowances**

**Relocation Allowance**

1.43 An RTP Stipend Scholarship recipient who relocates to Canberra from overseas or interstate in order to take up the award may be eligible to apply for reimbursement of relocation and travel expenses for themselves, their spouse and dependants in a situation where the relocation takes place within the first six months of candidature. An allowance of up to $505.00 per adult and $255.00 per child (with a total maximum entitlement of $1,455.00 per RTP Stipend Scholarship recipient) will be provided upon production of original receipts to the HDR Support team within six months of relocating.

1.44 Within the maximum entitlement period, RTP Stipend Scholarship recipients may claim travel expenses up to the value of economy or student concession airfares. If a recipient elects to travel by car they can apply to claim a per-kilometre allowance up to the equivalent airfare costs.

1.45 For the purpose of the relocation allowance:
   a. an eligible ‘adult’ is either a spouse or adult dependant. A spouse is a person who is married to, or in a bona fide de facto relationship with the RTP Stipend Scholarship recipient. An adult dependant is defined as someone who lives with the recipient and for whom the recipient and/or their spouse has substantial caring responsibilities; and
   b. an eligible child is a natural, adopted or foster child of the spouse, and is:
      • Less than 18 years of age: or
      • Less than 25 years of age and is undertaking full-time study.

**Thesis allowance**

1.46 An RTP Stipend Scholarship recipient submitting a thesis for examination within two years of the termination of the award is entitled to a thesis allowance of up to $840.00 for a Doctoral thesis and $420.00 for a Masters by Research thesis to assist with thesis production costs. This entitlement will be provided upon the production of original receipts (detailing the amount paid, date of payment and the service for which the payment was made) to the HDR Support team.
Claims for the thesis allowance must be lodged within six months of the date of the Faculty or Research Institute approval that all requirements for the degree have been completed, and within two years of the termination date of the RTP Stipend Scholarship.

Continuing eligibility

RTP Stipend Scholarship recipients must meet all progress requirements of the University in accordance with the HDR Progress and Milestones Policy to maintain eligibility for the scholarship.

Course transfer between research degrees

RTP Stipend Scholarship recipients may apply to transfer to a different HDR course during the tenure of the scholarship and will be eligible to retain their scholarship.

Applications for transfer will be considered in accordance with the HDR Enrolment and Changes to Candidature Policy and the Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research).

In the case of a transfer from Doctor of Philosophy to Master by Research, the duration of the award will be adjusted and will take into account time enrolled in the previous HDR course.

RTP Stipend Scholarship recipients who transfer to a Master by Research course are not eligible to apply for an extension to the scholarship.

Change of topic or discipline

RTP Stipend Scholarship recipients are able to request a change in topic or research project in accordance with the HDR Enrolments and Changes to Candidature Policy.

Scholarship recipients must advise the HDR Support team in writing of any change to their research project topic or title, to ensure that any change to field of education is recorded.

A significant change in topic may have implications on submission, resources and supervisory arrangements. A change in topic that impacts the progress of a student resulting in enrolment beyond the maximum period of support is not a valid reason for a request for extension of the RTP Stipend Scholarship (see below for information on extensions).

Extensions

RTP Stipend Scholarship recipients may apply to their host Faculty or Research Institute for an extension of the scholarship for up to a maximum of six months.

Applications for extension of a scholarship must demonstrate that the recipient’s progress has been delayed because of circumstances beyond the recipient’s control that relate solely to the research project, and that the recipient’s progress is otherwise satisfactory. Applications must include a detailed research plan demonstrating a planned completion within the extension period.

A course transfer that impacts the progress of a student resulting in enrolment beyond the maximum period of support is not a valid reason for a request for extension of the RTP Stipend Scholarship.
1.59 Employment commitments and other non-academic circumstances are not considered as reasons for \textit{RTP Stipend Scholarship} extension.

1.60 No additional leave entitlements are included in an extension to a \textit{RTP Stipend Scholarship}.

1.61 Successful applications for extension of an \textit{RTP Stipend Scholarship} must be endorsed by the Primary Supervisor and HDR Convenor before being approved by Dean of the Faculty or Director of the Research Institute.

\textbf{Employment and other funding}

1.62 \textit{RTP Stipend Scholarship} recipients are permitted to:

a. obtain funds for fieldwork, equipment or other expenses not covered by the \textit{RTP Stipend Scholarship};

b. obtain funding for overseas travel costs from other Australian Government awards or any other source; and

c. receive income derived from part-time work as long as employment does not impact detrimentally on the recipient’s progress in the course and is consistent with the conditions of the student visa.

\textbf{Concurrent Study}

1.63 An \textit{RTP Stipend Scholarship} recipient (during the duration of the award) may not enrol in any academic course of study leading to a qualification which is not a course related to the recipient’s higher degree by research.

\textbf{Research at other organisations}

1.64 The University may approve the \textit{RTP Stipend Scholarship} recipient conducting some research or fieldwork at other organisations, including organisations outside the Australian higher education system (includes placements and internships). In such cases, the University must ensure adequate support, supervision and training for the candidate at the other organisation. Approval must be provided by the Primary Supervisor and the Associate Dean Research of the Faculty or Director of the Research Institute.

1.65 Approval of an \textit{RTP Stipend Scholarship} recipient conducting research work at organisations outside the Australian higher education system will only be granted if adequate supervision can be maintained and on the condition that the recipient maintains enrolment for that period in their HDR course.

1.66 Scholarship recipients will generally be permitted to conduct research project work external to the University for up to 12 months of candidature, unless further time is deemed necessary by the Faculty or Research Institute.

1.67 Scholarship recipients are eligible to receive their stipend while undertaking research, fieldwork, placement or internship at other organisations if:

a. There is no other income associated with these activities;

b. The placement is within the scholarship period of support; and

c. The thesis examination has not been finalised.
1.68 Periods of research undertaken at another organisation will not extend the maximum period of support detailed at 1.11.

Transfer to University of Canberra

1.69 *RTP Stipend Scholarship* recipients who wish to transfer their candidature to University of Canberra from another university may apply to transfer their *RTP Stipend Scholarship* concurrently on their application for entry into the UC course.

1.70 The University may agree to the continuation of the *RTP Stipend Scholarship* in the following circumstances:
   a. the candidate meets UC policy on HDR admission (see *Admissions to Higher Degree by Research Courses Policy*) and the scholarship criteria as per the conditions of award;
   b. the candidate meets the criteria for award as set out in the *Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research)*;
   c. the candidate meets the scholarship ranking standards applied in the previous application round for scholarships; and
   d. the University has sufficient funding available to support the remaining scholarship duration.

Termination of Award

1.71 The *RTP Stipend Scholarship* will be terminated after the first pay period following the recipient’s submission of the thesis for examination, or when the scholarship expires, whichever is earlier.

1.72 Awards will be terminated before this time:
   a. if the recipient ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in these conditions of award;
   b. if, in the opinion of the University, the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of the *RTP Stipend Scholarship*;
   c. when a recipient ceases to be a full-time student in a case where approval has not been obtained from the University to hold the *RTP Stipend Scholarship* on a part-time basis;
   d. if the recipient does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of intermission and approval has not been obtained from the University to extend that period of intermission; or
   e. if the recipient has committed serious misconduct, including, but not limited to the provision of false or misleading information in relation to the *RTP Stipend Scholarship*.

1.73 If the scholarship is terminated, it cannot be reactivated unless the termination occurred in error.

Grievances

1.74 Grievances relating to academic or administrative actions or decisions taken by the University and its staff in relation to the *RTP Stipend Scholarship* are to be resolved informally in the first instance.

1.75 If informal resolution is not possible, the procedures outlined in the *Student Grievance Resolution Policy* should be applied.