

Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA): Conditions of Award 2012

A. Purpose

1. Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) scholarships are awarded to applicants of exceptional research potential undertaking a higher degree by research (HDR). APAs are provided to assist with general living costs through the provision of a stipend. APAs are governed by the Federal Government's [Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines \(Research\)](#).

B. Eligibility

2. To be eligible for an APA, an applicant must:
 - have completed a Bachelor degree with First Class Honours, or be regarded by the University as having an equivalent level of attainment;
 - be enrolled, or be seeking to enrol, as a full-time candidate in a Doctor of Philosophy course at the University;
 - 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; and
 - not have consumed more than 2.5 equivalent full-time study load (EFTSL) (i.e. have been enrolled in a maximum of 2.5 years full-time equivalent (FTE) study) in current enrolment in a higher degree by research at the time of applying for the APA.
3. An APA 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 APA stipend rate to undertake the HDR. Income earned from sources unrelated to the course of study is not subject to the 75% rule;
 - is on paid study leave;
 - holds a research doctorate or equivalent;
 - has previously held a Commonwealth-funded postgraduate research scholarship (including an APA or an Australian Postgraduate Award (Industry) (APAI)), unless it was terminated within six months of the scholarship's payments commencing; or
 - has consumed more than 2.5 EFTSL in current enrolment in a higher degree by research at the time of applying for the APA.

C. Selection

4. Selection of the APA recipients will be undertaken by the University Research Scholarships Committee on the basis of academic merit and research potential.

D. Commencement

5. Recipients must accept both a place in the Doctor of Philosophy course as well as the scholarship by the date specified in the offer letter. Recipients must enrol in the course detailed on the offer letter within three months of the date of offer.

E. Duration of Scholarship

6. The duration of a full-time APA is three years for a candidate undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy course.

7. Scholarship recipients will be assessed formally no less than annually through the Annual Progress Report process for continued eligibility of their awards.
8. The duration of an APA will be reduced by any period of study undertaken:
 - towards the degree prior to the commencement of the APA;
 - towards the degree during suspension of the APA (unless the study was undertaken as part of an Australian Government financially supported international postgraduate research scholarship or award); or
 - previously while receiving an Australian Postgraduate Coursework Award.
9. Leave allowances, i.e. University-approved sick leave and parental leave as prescribed in these conditions are added to the duration of the recipient's scholarship.

Extensions

10. APA recipients may apply to the Research Students' Office for an extension of the scholarship for up to a maximum of six months.
11. 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.
12. Applications for extension of an APA must be endorsed by the Chair of the supervisory panel and Associate Dean Research (or delegate) of the Faculty or Director of the URC.
13. Ill health, employment commitments and other non-academic circumstances are not considered as reasons for APA extension.
14. No additional leave entitlements are included in an extension to an APA.

Part-time study (domestic recipients only)

15. The University may approve a part-time APA for a domestic recipient only if:
 - the recipient has exceptional circumstances; or
 - the recipient is undertaking Commercialisation Training Scheme training concurrently with their HDR degree.
16. For the purpose of part-time study, the University must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances relate to significant caring commitments, including:
 - being the primary carer of a pre-school child;
 - being the primary carer of a school-aged child and a sole parent with limited access to outside support;
 - being the primary carer for an invalid or disabled spouse, child or parent; or
 - the recipient has a health condition which makes full-time enrolment impossible or unreasonably onerous (appropriate documentation relevant to the condition is required).
17. Stipends for part-time APAs are not tax exempt.
18. An APA 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.

Course transfer between research degrees

19. APA recipients may apply to transfer from a Doctor of Philosophy to a Professional Doctorate (research) course or from a Doctor of Philosophy to a Masters by Research course during the tenure of the scholarship, providing that they are making satisfactory progress and in accordance with the University's *Higher Degree by Research Enrolment and Changes to Candidature Policy*. Applications for transfer will be reviewed by the Associate Dean Research (or delegate) of the relevant Faculty or Director of the relevant URC on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the [Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines \(Research\)](#).
20. The maximum scholarship duration for a Masters by Research is 2 years full time equivalent (FTE). The duration of the award will be adjusted to reflect a transfer from a Doctor of Philosophy to a Masters by Research course and to take into account time enrolled in a HDR course. APA recipients who transfer to a Masters by Research course are not eligible to apply for an extension to the scholarship.

Leave without stipend

21. Any suspension of an APA scholarship occurs in conjunction with approval of intermission from study for the same time period (see *Enrolment and Changes to Candidature in Higher Degree by Research Courses Policy* for the University's policy for HDR intermission). Periods of study undertaken towards the degree during suspension of the APA will be deducted from the duration of the scholarship. In the case of a recipient who is studying on an international student visa, any 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*).

Leave without stipend for domestic recipients

22. APA recipients may apply for a suspension of their award 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.
23. Suspensions of scholarships within the first six months after initial enrolment will not be approved except in exceptional circumstances.
24. If intermission from study and suspension of scholarship are approved, an APA recipient's end date will be adjusted and increased by the number of days leave taken.
25. All applications for leave without stipend must be submitted via the [Application for Intermission Form](#) to the Research Students' Office and must have the Chair of the Supervisory Panel's endorsement and the approval of the Associate Dean Research (or delegate) in the Faculty or Director in the URC.
26. APA recipients must notify the Research Students' Office at least three weeks prior to resuming study following a period of intermission from study.
27. APA recipients who suspend their studies without notifying the Research Students' Office through the process of applying for intermission will be required to repay any award payments to which they were not entitled.

F. Employment and other funding

28. APA recipients are permitted to:
 - obtain funds for fieldwork, equipment or other expenses not covered by the APA;

- obtain funding for overseas travel costs from other Australian Government awards or any other source;
- 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. The University expects scholarship recipients to engage in their research work in a full time capacity (35 hours a week), for at least 48 weeks a year. The University requires that part-time work (outside the research project) during the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday should not exceed an average of 8 hours a week.

G. Stipend and Allowances

29. An APA carries an annual tax free stipend of the amount of which is noted in the recipient's offer letter. The level of the stipend will not be reduced during the period of the award. The stipend will be paid in fortnightly instalments. Payment is calculated from the date upon which the recipient commences enrolment in the HDR degree.
30. In 2012, the stipend will be paid at the following rates:
- \$23,728 pa tax-free for a full-time candidate; and
 - \$12,898 pa taxable for a part-time candidate.
31. The APA stipend rates are indexed each year to compensate for increases in living costs.

Relocation Allowance

32. An APA 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. In 2010, an allowance of up to \$505.00 per adult and \$255.00 per child (with a total maximum entitlement of \$1,455.00 per APA recipient) will be provided upon production of original receipts to the Research Students' Office within six months of relocating.
33. Within the maximum entitlement listed in Paragraph 32, APA 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.
34. For the purpose of the relocation allowance:
- 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 APA 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
 - 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

35. An APA 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 Research Students' Office.

36. Claims for the thesis allowance must be lodged within six months of the date of the Faculty or University Research Centre approval that all requirements for the degree have been completed, and within two years of the termination date of the APA.

H. Leave Entitlements

Recreation Leave

37. APA recipients are entitled to twenty 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.

Sick Leave

38. APA recipients may take up to ten days paid sick leave a year within the tenure of the award and this may be accrued over the duration.
39. Recipients may also receive additional paid sick leave of up to a total of 12 weeks during the duration of the APA for medically substantiated periods of illness lasting longer than ten days. Where a recipient takes a period of additional sick leave, the duration of the APA will be extended by that period.
40. 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.
41. Appropriate documentation relevant to the condition must be provided to the Research Students' Office within three weeks of the personal leave request.

Maternity Leave

42. APA recipients who have completed twelve months of their award are entitled to a maximum of twelve weeks paid maternity leave during the tenure of their award. Paid maternity leave may also be approved if a recipient has adopted a child. Periods of paid maternity leave are in addition to the normal duration of the APA. Recipients who have not completed twelve months of their award may access unpaid maternity leave through the award's suspension provision.
43. A medical certificate including the anticipated date of birth must be submitted to the Research Students' Office at least six weeks before leave is planned.

Parenting Leave

44. APA recipients who are partners of women giving birth and who have completed 12 months of their award are entitled to a period of ten days paid parenting leave at the time of the birth (to be taken during the period one week before the birth and five weeks after the birth of the child). Periods of paid parenting leave are in addition to the normal duration of the APA. Recipients who have not completed 12 months of their award may access unpaid parenting leave through the award's suspension provisions.
45. A medical certificate including the anticipated date of birth must be submitted to the Research Students' Office at least six weeks before leave is planned.

I. Research at other organisations

46. The University may approve the APA recipient conducting some research or fieldwork at other organisations, including organisations outside the Australian higher education system. 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 Chair of the Supervisory Panel and the Associate Dean Research of the Faculty or Director of the URC.
47. Scholarship recipients will generally be permitted to conduct research project work overseas for up to twelve months of candidature, unless further time is deemed necessary by the Faculty or URC.
48. Approval of an APA 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.
49. An APA recipient will generally not be allowed to undertake overseas study in the first 12 months of candidature unless there are exceptional circumstances.
50. Recipients must inform the Research Students' Office of their intent to conduct research overseas, prior to the commencement of the work.

J. Concurrent Study

51. An APA recipient (during the duration of the award) may not enrol in any academic course of study leading to a qualification which is not an essential part of the recipient's higher degree by research.

K. Transfer of Award

52. The University's expectation is that a recipient of an award won in a competitive process at University of Canberra will complete his or her candidature at the University.
53. APA recipients who transfer their candidature to another Australian university may continue to receive their APA only if their new university agrees to its continuation and subject to the new university having sufficient APA grant amounts of its own available to support the candidature. The new university must ensure that it has received information from the former university on any APA payment the student has received and the duration of the APA already consumed.
54. Transfer arrangements must be agreed between institutions, subject to the APA recipient being offered a higher degree by research place at the new institution.
55. APA recipients who wish to transfer their candidature to University of Canberra from another university may apply to transfer their APA concurrently on their application for entry into the UC course. The University may agree to the continuation of the APA in the following circumstances:
 - the University has sufficient APA grant amounts available to support the remaining APA duration;
 - the candidate meets UC policy on HDR admissibility (see Admissions to Higher Degree by Research Courses Policy) and the scholarship criteria as per this policy.
 - the candidate meets the criteria for award as set out in Chapter Two of the *Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research)*.

- the candidate meets the scholarship ranking standards applied in the previous application round for APA scholarships.

L. Termination of Award

56. The APA will be terminated after the first pay period following the recipient’s submission of the thesis for examination, or when the award expires, whichever is earlier. Awards will be terminated before this time:

- if the recipient ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in Section B of this Schedule;
- 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 APA;
- 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 APA on a part-time basis;
- 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
- if the recipient has committed serious misconduct, including, but not limited to the provision of false or misleading information in relation to the APA.

57. If the award is terminated, it cannot be reactivated unless the termination occurred in error.

M. Reporting on Progress

58. APA recipients must provide all reports required by the University including an annual progress report submitted through the Chair of the Supervisory Panel and the Associate Dean Research (or delegate) of the Faculty or Director of the URC. If the University does not consider that progress is satisfactory the APA may be terminated and/or the candidate placed on probation.

N. Responsibilities

<i>Role</i>	<i>Action</i>
Chair of the Supervisory Panel (prospective or current)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess relevant applications according to the University’s HDR scholarship ranking criteria and provide completed documentation to the Associate Dean Research (or delegate) of the Faculty or Director of the University Research Centre (URC) • Report immediately to the Associate Dean Research (or delegate) or Director any failure by recipient to make satisfactory progress in his or her course or to abide by the regulations governing the course and the scholarship conditions • Monitor employment and hours worked by the recipient • Review recipient’s application for extension to scholarship before endorsement • Review recipient’s application for leave without stipend before endorsement
Associate Dean Research or Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Faculty or URC’s assessment of applications for scholarships • Ensure the Faculty is represented by a delegate at each University Research Scholarships Committee meeting • Act upon any failure by a scholarship recipient to make satisfactory progress in his or her course or to abide by the regulations governing

	<p>the course and the scholarship conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review recipient's application for extension to scholarship before approval • Review applications for transfer of course • Review and approve recipient's application for leave without stipend
University Research Scholarships Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all applications and award scholarships based on the University's ranking criteria
Research Students' Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive applications for scholarships and facilitate the assessment, review and award process. • Advise successful applicants of their award • Enrol successful applicants into their course and liaise with the Finance office to establish and manage stipend and leave payments • Confirm a recipient's part-time receipt of award • Process any changes to candidature that will impact upon award conditions and/or stipend payments, including leave entitlements • Record award recipient's progress through the course via the Annual Progress Report process
Manager, Research Students' Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and approve applications for extensions to scholarship stipends