Postgraduate Research Support Scheme
The Application Process and Tips on Applying

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Background and the Online Application Process
PRSS

PURPOSE AND SCALE OF THE FUND

- The PRSS scheme was introduced in 2001 to provide direct support for postgraduate research students.
- In 2016, the total available fund is $1.5 Million for the university.
- Funds are allocated to Schools based on their higher degree enrolment figures from the previous year.
- Funding allocation for Schools in FASS as follows:
  - SSPS $57,645
  - SLAM $68,079
  - SOPHI $66,423
  - SLC $31,204
  - SE $8,025
PRSS

NATURE OF THE FUND

Funds are awarded by Schools to eligible applicants on a competitive basis according to the University’s general guidelines.

In making their decisions the School selection committee will consider:

1. Quality of the applicant’s proposal as an application for research funding
2. Quality of the applicant’s track record relative to opportunity and stage of candidature
3. Demonstrated need for funding
4. School priorities, if any, placed on the different expenditure categories in any year
PRSS

WHY APPLY?

- To advance your research
- To advance your prospects
- To learn the funding application genre
WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- All currently enrolled research students, including international students, who are considered in-time at the closing date for applications and have demonstrated satisfactory progress

- Research doctorate students: candidature must not exceed 8 full-time semesters or part-time equivalent

- Masters by research students: candidature must not exceed 4 full-time semesters or part-time equivalent

- Applicants will not be considered if they have not demonstrated satisfactory progress in the relevant timeframe
WHAT WON’T BE FUNDED

- expenses that have not or will not be incurred in the current calendar year
- attendance at conferences where the student is not presenting a paper or poster they have authored
- specialist services or training otherwise available through the School or anticipated at the point of enrolment
- expenses and consumables normally covered by the School’s infrastructure (such as stationery, questionnaires, photocopying)
- books, periodicals and software obtainable within the University
- non-essential computers and equipment, or computers and equipment otherwise accessible through the School
- thesis production expenses if these are already provided for by a student’s scholarship, or the student is not submitting in the current semester or calendar year.
- Thesis printing costs (lodgement is now electronic, or HDRAC will print hard copies if required)
PRSS

WHAT MAY BE FUNDED

- Essential costs that are integral to the research and justified within the application will be funded to the relevant limits. Examples of fundable items include: archival visit and fieldwork, data gathering
- Conference attendance to present original papers or posters
- Specialist services or training not available through the School that was not anticipated at the point of enrolment
- Field expenses not normally provided by the School
- Specialist books, periodicals or software unobtainable through the University
- Equipment or computers not available through the School
- Theses production expenses not otherwise provided for
PRSS

CONDITIONS OF THE GRANT

- The funds must be expended within the calendar year

- A student cannot lodge a second application for the remainder of expenditure incurred under a previous successful PRSS application
  - For example: if you have previously claimed $1,000 towards the purchase of a laptop computer awarded under a successful PRSS application, you cannot apply again for another $1,000 for the same computer
HOW MUCH?

- Minimum you can apply for in each application round: $200
- Maximum you can apply for in each application round: $1,200
- If you are applying for conference attendance the relevant limits are:
  - $3,000 for presentations at conferences in Europe, Africa, North and South America
  - $2,000 for presentations at conferences held in other overseas countries
- Thesis production expenses (does not including printing):
  - Research Doctorate thesis: $600
  - Masters by Research thesis: $300
- Successful applicants will have funds awarded transferred directly into a nominated bank account.
PRSS

HOW OFTEN AND WHEN?

- You can only lodge one application in any PRSS round
- Research Doctoral Students are only permitted three successful PRSS awards across the duration of their in-time candidature
- Masters by Research Students are only permitted one successful PRSS award during their in-time candidature
- If a Masters by Research student converts to a Research Doctorate the total number of successful PRSS awards they are permitted extends to three, including any award they received as a Masters student
- Schools hold at least one PRSS round per year
- Late applications will not be accepted
PRSS – Online Applications

Questions – 1-9

- First nine questions below are automatically filled from Sydney Student data. Therefore, you should make sure your Sydney Student details are up-to-date! If not, please contact HDRAC.2@sydney.edu.au.

1. Student personal details
2. Student ID
3. Faculty
4. Department (School)
5. Degree
6. Attendance (Full-time or part-time)
7. Research supervisor name
8. Research supervisor ID
9. Research supervisor email
PRSS – Online Applications

Questions – 10-13

- Next four questions are applicable if you hold a scholarship:

10. Year of application
11. Name of award
12. Commencement date
13. Value of award
Next five questions involve the funding you are requesting, under each of the five categories:

14. Conference presentation
15. Use of specialist services, visit to specialist facilities or to learn specialist techniques
16. Field expenses
17. Purchase of specialist equipment
18. Computers
PRSS – Online Applications

Questions – 19-21

- Final three questions are free text and supporting documentation for your application:

19. Justification and details of requested funding.

20. Achievement related to research

21. Supporting documents [upload – multiple permitted]

- You then declare the information is complete and true and submit the application.
After your online application

- Once you submit your application, your research supervisor will be automatically emailed asking if they support it.

- Your supervisor also has the option to provide a free text response and/or attach documents at this point.

- If your supervisor does not support the application, it will still go through to your School’s approval committee, but they will be informed of this lack of support.

- The appropriate administering unit will make their determinations (Schools in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences), which will be confirmed with the HDR Administration Centre (HDRAC). HDRAC will inform students of results.
FOR ASSISTANCE

- Hdrac.2@sydney.edu.au
- Supervisors
- Departmental PG Research Coordinators
- School Research Support Officers
What We’re Looking For In Applications
Demonstrated need for funding

- In this context need refers not to financial need but the degree to which the proposed expenditure is essential to or will expedite the completion of the research project
- Include a brief statement justifying the need for and proposed use of funds
- Make explicit the benefits that will flow from the expenditure (how it will advance the progress of your research or assist your development as a researcher)
- Specify the projected outcomes from the proposed funding (discovery elements, analytical advance, plans for publication, etc)
- You should also include evidence of outcomes from previous funding through PRSS and other grant schemes if applicable
- Please note that due to the competitive nature of this program, successful applicants may be awarded partial funding rather than the full amount they request in their application.
What to include in your application

Your application should include a clear and concise statement of the proposed use of funds and their benefit to your candidature. That is, how the funded activities may contribute to any of the following:

- the quality and originality of your research
- the potential impact of your research
- the acceleration of your research (timely submission)
- your research skills base and/or professionalism

Attach a detailed budget with supporting evidence, such as:

- copies of receipts for costs already paid for
- quotations for travel and accommodation
- if presenting at a conference include evidence that your paper has been accepted
  (if not available yet indicate when it may be)

Include details on any other funding you have already obtained (or have applied for) for the activity that is the focus of the application.

Include evidence of ethics approval, if applicable.
Achievement relative to opportunity

- Include any achievement related to your research such as:
  - publications (in press or submitted),
  - conference presentations,
  - internal reports or other scholarly activities that have resulted from your research to date
  - list details of scholarships you hold, or any other indications of research excellence

- Note: A track record of achievement relative to opportunity and stage of candidature provides some indication of satisfactory progress during your candidature, however it is not a pre-requisite for a successful PRSS application.
Justification

- Description of conference or research trip or whatever is being requested
- Statement of how the funds requested fit into the thesis and are needed to assist in its completion.
- Outcomes of previous PRSS funding
- Details on any other funding you have already obtained (or are likely to obtain) for the activity that is the focus of this application.
- Statement outlining status of ethics approval for fieldwork expense claims, if applicable.
- Copy of expenses incurred to date or quotes regarding the funds being requested
- Indicate how the proposed project fits within your overall doctoral research project and timeline
Justification

Indicate how the proposed project contributes to some or all of the following:

- the quality of your research
- the originality of your research
- the potential impact of your research
- the acceleration of your research (timely submission)
- your research skill base
- your professionalization
Conference Presentations

- Evidence of acceptance of papers at conferences should be included.
- If this is not available at the time of submission you should indicate when it will be forthcoming.
- Include the abstract you have or intend to submit, plus any relevant correspondence with organizers.
- Indicate the standing of the conference (be clear about whether or not it is a postgraduate conference, whether it is selective, etc.)
Discursive strengthening:

“My paper has been accepted through a competitive process of blind peer-review … ”

“I will be the only postgraduate presenter on a panel featuring established researchers from …”

“Selection for this conference was based on the submission of a full written paper. The expert reviewers commented that …”
Preparing your application

- Writing and editing: plan your time between now and the submission deadline, allow for critique and redrafting
- Consider making a meeting with your supervisor to discuss your application draft
- Ask them if they can provide a supporting statement and discuss what it might cover.
What makes a strong application?

- A brief but clear statement about the significance of the research that is understandable to a non-specialist academic reader
- A clear outline of what the fundable research is, how it contributes to the larger project, and how it will be achieved: what, where, when, how
- An indication of how this application for funding knits with other funding applications you may have in train with other granting agencies
- A brief statement on prior research achieved via PRSS funding if relevant
- Establishing how the project is relative to your progress in the degree
- There are no grey areas in the application (questions about Ethics approval, mystery items or obscure amounts in the budget etc)
- Evidence-based claims to research excellence (the significance of the conference, peer-esteem and ranking of journals)
Things to Avoid

- Typos and spelling mistakes
- Sloppy formatting
- Silly email addresses
- Unrealistic research ambitions or schedules
- Over-promising in relation to outcomes and impact
- Undocumented claims to excellence
Questions & Answers