

# RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIPS POLICY 2018

The Academic Board, as delegate of the Senate of the University of Sydney, adopts the following policy.

Dated: 5 November 2018

Last amended:

Name: Professor Anthony Masters

Position: Chair, Academic Board

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## 1 Name of policy

This is the Research Training Program Scholarships Policy 2018.

## 2 Commencement

This policy commences on 5 November 2018.

## 3 Policy is binding

Except to the extent that a contrary intention is expressed, this policy binds the University, staff, students and affiliates.

## 4 Statement of intent

This policy:

- (a) establishes the framework for administration of Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarships awarded by the University; and
- (b) has been created in accordance with clause 1.6.45 of the [Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#).

## 5 Application

- (1) This policy applies to the administration of Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarships for higher degree by research students. It covers the following scholarships:
  - (a) Research Training Program Fee Offset;
  - (b) Research Training Program Stipend; and
  - (c) Research Training Program Allowance.
- (2) This policy does not apply to:
  - (a) higher degree by research scholarships offered by individual faculties or University schools;
  - (b) higher degree by research scholarships offered from bequest or grant funding;
  - (c) higher degree by research scholarships funded from other Australian Government funding, such as National Health and Medical Research Council Scholarships or Australia Awards; or
  - (d) any other higher degree by research scholarships offered University-wide.

## 6 Definitions

**continuing scholarship student**

means either:

- a student who receives a scholarship under an Australian Government scholarship program that preceded the RTP, which would terminate on or after 1 January 2017; or
- a student who has received an offer of a scholarship under an Australian Government scholarship program, and whose offer was scheduled to commence on or after 1 January 2017.

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Dean</b>                          | means the Executive Dean or Dean of a faculty, or the Head of School and Dean of a University school.  |
| <b>faculty</b>                       | means a faculty or University school.  |
| <b>HDR</b>                           | means a higher degree by research offered by the University in accordance with the <a href="#">University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule 2011</a> .  |
| <b>HDRAC</b>                         | means the University's Higher Degree by Research Administration Centre.  |
| <b>HDR Scholarships Subcommittee</b> | means the Higher Degree by Research Scholarships Subcommittee of the Academic Board Graduate Studies Committee.  |
| <b>higher education provider</b>     | means a higher education provider as specified in section 16-15 or section 16-20 of the <a href="#">Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)</a> .  |
| <b>recipient</b>                     | means, unless further defined, a student who has been awarded any of an RTP Fee Offset, RTP Stipend or an RTP Allowance.   |
| <b>research period</b>               | has the meaning given in the <a href="#">University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule 2011</a> , which at the date of this policy:<br><br>means an enrolment period set by the University and published on its website.<br><br><b>Note:</b> Research periods are published at:<br><a href="http://sydney.edu.au/study/study-dates.html">http://sydney.edu.au/study/study-dates.html</a>   |
| <b>RTP</b>                           | means the Australian Government Research Training Program.   |
| <b>RTP Allowance</b>                 | means a scholarship funded by the RTP and paid by the University to a student to assist them with ancillary costs of an HDR course, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for international students, a standard overseas student health cover policy approved by the Commonwealth Department of Health which covers the student and any spouse and dependants; and</li> <li>study related relocation costs.</li> </ul> |
| <b>RTP Fee Offset</b>                | means a scholarship funded by the RTP and paid by the University to a student to meet their liability for tuition fees. The RTP Fee Offset covers all tuition fees payable to the University for the course of study for the duration of the scholarship.  |
| <b>RTP Guidelines</b>                | means the <a href="#">Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2017</a> .  |
| <b>RTP Scholarship</b>               | means any or all of an RTP Fee Offset, RTP Stipend or an RTP Allowance.  |
| <b>RTP Stipend</b>                   | means a scholarship funded by the RTP and paid by the University to a student to assist with their living costs while undertaking an HDR course.   |

**supervisor** means, in relation to a HDR student, a person appointed to discharge the responsibilities set out in clause 14 of the [Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2013](#).

## 7 Eligibility

- (1) A domestic or an international student may be offered an RTP Scholarship if they meet, or are considered likely to meet, the relevant criteria. However a student may only receive an RTP Scholarship if they are enrolled in, or have an unconditional offer of admission to, an HDR course.

**Note:** See the [University of Sydney \(Higher Degrees by Research\) Rule 2011](#) for information about available higher degrees by research.

- (2) A student will not be eligible for an RTP Fee Offset if they are currently receiving an Australian Government award or scholarship designed to offset HDR tuition fees.
- (3) A student will not be eligible for an RTP Stipend if they are receiving income from another source to support their general living costs while undertaking their course of study, if that income is greater than 75 per cent of that student's RTP Stipend rate.
  - (a) 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 to be taken into account.

## 8 RTP Fee Offset

- (1) The University will automatically consider domestic students for an RTP Fee Offset when they apply for an HDR course.
- (2) The University will automatically consider international students for an RTP Fee Offset if they apply for an RTP Stipend under clause 9 of this policy.
- (3) An RTP Fee Offset will be awarded to domestic students who:
  - (a) receive an unconditional offer of admission to an HDR course; and
  - (b) meet the eligibility criteria under clause 7(2) of this policy.
- (4) An RTP Fee Offset will be awarded to international students who:
  - (a) receive an unconditional offer of admission to an HDR;
  - (b) are awarded an RTP Stipend; and
  - (c) meet the eligibility criteria under clause 7(2) of this policy.

**Note:** Tuition fees are offset after the relevant census date for each research period.

## 9 RTP Stipend

- (1) Domestic students and international students must apply to be considered for an RTP Stipend.
- (2) Applications for an RTP Stipend must be made by:
  - (a) **for new students**, the student:



- (i) indicating that they wish to be considered for an RTP Stipend as part of the application for admission to their HDR course; and
    - (ii) submitting research experience evidence through the relevant process specified on the [Scholarships Office website](#); or
  - (b) **for current students**, completing the application form available on the [Scholarships Office website](#).
- (3) RTP Stipends are awarded by a competitive process determined by the Academic Board consistently with the following principles.

**Note:** Details of the process are available from the [Scholarships Office website](#).

  - (a) Recipients will be selected on the bases of academic merit and research experience.
  - (b) All applications will be assessed initially by the Scholarships Office and reviewed by the relevant faculty, taking into consideration the following factors as applicable:
    - (i) first class honours degree;
    - (ii) first class honours equivalent degree;
    - (iii) Masters by research degree;
    - (iv) the world rankings of the institution that conferred the relevant qualification; and
    - (v) research experience.
  - (c) The Scholarships Office, in consultation with the relevant faculty, may prioritise applicants based on:
    - (i) whether this is the first time that the applicant would receive an Australian Government or University scholarship to complete an HDR at the same level of study; and
    - (ii) whether the current course of study is the first that the applicant will complete at that level.
  - (d) After assessment, the HDR Scholarships Subcommittee will consider all eligible applicants on the basis of the criteria in clause 9(3), and determine the number of offers to be made.
- (4) The RTP Stipend rate will be determined in accordance with clause 1.6.10 of the [RTP Guidelines](#).
  - (a) The University will offer each recipient an RTP Stipend rate at least equal to the base full time rate and no more than the maximum full time rate that is advised by the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training under clause 1.6.10(4) of the RTP Guidelines.
  - (b) Each year, the University will pay recipients their RTP Stipend in proportion to the period for which the recipient has been awarded the RTP Stipend.
  - (c) RTP Stipend payments will be paid on a fortnightly basis.
  - (d) If a recipient is approved to study on a part-time basis in accordance with clause 15 of this policy, then the recipient's part time RTP Stipend rate will be 50 per cent of the applicable full-time RTP Stipend rate.

## 10 RTP Allowance

- (1) RTP Allowances may be awarded to a student (domestic or international) who also receives either or both of an RTP Fee Offset or an RTP Stipend.
- (2) Domestic students will be provided with a relocation allowance in accordance with the [Research Training Program Relocation Allowance Guideline \(Domestic\)](#).
- (3) All other available RTP Allowances will be detailed in the relevant RTP Scholarship terms and conditions that are published in accordance with clause 12 of this policy.

## 11 Offers

The University will notify applicants of the outcome of their RTP Scholarship application by email to the applicant's University email address (for current students), or the preferred email address contained in the student's application for admission.

## 12 Terms and conditions

- (1) The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Registrar) must determine the terms and conditions for RTP Scholarships, which must specify:
  - (a) eligibility requirements;
  - (b) benefits provided;
  - (c) duration of support;
  - (d) application, selection and offer processes;
  - (e) extension and suspension arrangements;
  - (f) paid leave or work arrangements;
  - (g) arrangements for changes in student circumstances, such as:
    - (i) change in award course;
    - (ii) change from full-time to part-time study or vice versa;
    - (iii) change of institution;
    - (iv) change of research area.
  - (h) circumstances in which support may be terminated; and
    - (i) any necessary transitional arrangements for scholarship holders under prior schemes.
- (2) The Scholarships Office must establish and maintain a publicly available page on the University's website for RTP Scholarships. This web page must:
  - (a) include copies of the terms and conditions applying to RTP Scholarships; and
  - (b) be linked to the student recognition and support awards web page established under clause 9 of the [Student Recognition Awards Policy 2016](#).

### 13 Duration

- (1) The maximum duration of an RTP Scholarship for a Master's by research student is:
  - (a) **RTP Stipend** – eight research periods;
  - (b) **RTP Fee Offset** – eight research periods;
  - (c) **RTP Allowance** – in accordance with the time limits set out in the [HDR Thesis Expenses Allowance Guidelines](#).
- (2) The maximum duration of a scholarship for a Doctorate by research student is:
  - (a) **RTP Stipend** – 36 months, with a possible extension of six months if the student achieves a progress review rating above “unsatisfactory progress” at the progress review at the end of their third year;  
**Note:** See [Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2016](#).
  - (b) **RTP Fee Offset (domestic students)** – sixteen research periods;
  - (c) **RTP Fee Offset (international students)** – twelve research periods with a possible extension of two research periods.
  - (d) An application for extension of scholarship must be made in writing to, and approved by, the student's supervisor and the relevant Head of School or Head of Discipline.
- (3) Periods of study already undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the RTP Scholarship will be deducted from the maximum duration of the RTP Scholarship.

### 14 Suspension and deferral

- (1) A recipient may defer their RTP Scholarship for up to one research period with the approval of:
  - (a) their supervisor; and
  - (b) the relevant Associate Dean (Research Education).
- (2) A recipient may not apply to suspend their RTP Scholarship within their first six months of study, unless:
  - (a) permitted by a legislative provision; or
  - (b) approved by the relevant Associate Dean (Research Education) on the basis of special circumstances
    - (i) Special circumstances include carer responsibilities or medical conditions, and will generally be out of the recipient's control.
- (3) After the first six months, a recipient may apply to suspend their RTP Scholarship for up to 12 months, for any reason.
  - (a) Periods of suspension are cumulative and failure to resume study after suspension will result in the RTP Scholarship being terminated.
  - (b) The suspension must be approved by the relevant Associate Dean (Research Education).



- (c) Periods of study towards the relevant degree during suspension of the RTP Scholarship will be considered as advance standing and be deducted from the maximum tenure of the RTP Scholarship.

**Note:** International students should check the terms and restrictions applicable to their visas before suspending.

- (4) An RTP Scholarship will be suspended during any period of suspension of studies.

## 15 Leave

- (1) The recipient of an RTP Stipend is eligible for paid leave in accordance with the [RTP Guidelines](#). Leave entitlements include:

- (a) recreation leave;
- (b) sick leave; and
- (c) maternity leave.

**Note:** Details of the specific leave entitlements for RTP Scholarships are available from the set out in the [Research Training Program Stipend Scholarship \(Domestic\) Terms and Conditions](#) and the [Research Training Program Stipend Scholarship \(International\) Terms and Conditions 2018](#).

- (2) Periods of leave under this clause above are not considered part of the period of support under an RTP Scholarship.

## 16 Part-time study

- (1) Domestic student recipients of an RTP Fee Offset may study on a part-time basis with the approval of the relevant Associate Dean (Research Education).
- (2) All other recipients of RTP Scholarships may study on a part-time basis only:
  - (a) with the approval of the relevant Associate Dean (Research Education); and
  - (b) on the basis of special circumstances.
    - (i) Special circumstances include carer responsibilities or a medical condition, and are generally outside of the recipient's control.
    - (ii) Work commitments are not considered special circumstances.
- (3) International students will only receive approval to study part-time if it is permitted under their visa.
- (4) Recipients enrolled part-time must undertake 50 per cent of the full time equivalent study load.
  - (a) The scholarship duration will be adjusted accordingly.
- (5) If a recipient converts from part-time to full-time study or vice versa:
  - (a) the recipient must notify the University of the change to their enrolment in accordance with clause 18(2) of this policy; and
  - (b) the scholarship duration will be adjusted accordingly.
- (6) Maximum durations specified in clause 13 of this policy will apply.



## **17 Work restrictions**

- (1) International students must refer to their visa conditions to determine their ability to undertake work outside of their HDR course.
  - (a) The application fee for a work permit, if required, is not covered under an RTP Scholarship.
- (2) Delays in completion of studies due to employment commitments will not be accepted as grounds for an extension of an RTP Scholarship.

## **18 Changes to enrolment**

- (1) Recipients may transfer from a Master's by research to a Doctorate by research, or vice versa. In such cases, this policy will apply as if the recipient had been undertaking the new course from the date of commencement of their original course.
- (2) A recipient who changes their enrolment must inform the following within 10 working days:
  - (a) their supervisor, by written notice; and
  - (b) the University, through the Sydney Student portal.
- (3) Changes to enrolment include, but are not limited to:
  - (a) changes to attendance pattern;
  - (b) suspension;
  - (c) leave of absence;
  - (d) withdrawal;
  - (e) course transfer;
  - (f) change in field of education code;
  - (g) candidature conversion.
- (4) HDRAC will notify a recipient if any change to the recipient's enrolment affects their entitlement to an RTP Scholarship.
- (5) The University may require a recipient to repay any RTP Stipend or RTP Allowances that were overpaid as a result of a change to enrolment.

## **19 Transfer to and from another higher education provider**

- (1) A student transferring to the University from another higher education provider is eligible to apply for an RTP Scholarship.
  - (a) The student must provide evidence of any earlier periods of study that would count toward an RTP Scholarship as part of their application for admission to the relevant course.
- (2) A student transferring to another higher education provider from the University may request from HDRAC a statement of the period they have been in receipt of an RTP Scholarship.

## 20 Supervision and facilities

- (1) Supervision of HDR students is governed by the [Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2013](#).

**Note:** In particular, the responsibilities of supervisors are set out in clause 14 of the [Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2013](#). See also the [Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2015](#).

- (2) The provision of facilities to HDR students is governed by the [Essential Resources for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2016](#).

## 21 Industry placements, research internships and professional practice activities

- (1) Recipients may undertake industry placements, research internships, and professional practice activities of up to six months' duration that are approved as part of their HDR course by:
  - (a) their supervisor;
  - (b) the relevant Associate Dean (Research Education).
- (2) RTP Fee Offset recipients are eligible to have their scholarship extended for the duration of an approved placement, research internship or professional practice activity.
  - (a) The total length of the RTP Fee Offset cannot extend beyond the maximum duration set out in clause 13 of this policy.
- (3) RTP Stipends may be extended for the duration of an approved industry placement, research internship or professional practice activity if:
  - (a) the recipient already holds, and remains eligible for, an RTP Stipend;
  - (b) no other income is received from these activities; and
  - (c) the maximum duration of the RTP Stipend has not been reached.

## 22 Acknowledgement of RTP scholarship

- (1) The Australian Government's contribution must be formally acknowledged when, at any time during or after completion of a relevant HDR course:
  - (a) the recipient;
  - (b) the recipient's supervisor; or
  - (c) any other partypublishes or produces material (such as books, articles, newsletters or other literary or artistic works) relating to the recipient's research project.
- (2) This requirement is met by including the following statement in any materials: "This research is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship".

## 23 Termination

- (1) An RTP Fee Offset or an RTP Stipend will be terminated when:
- (a) the recipient submits their thesis for examination;
  - (b) the recipient exceeds the maximum duration applicable to their RTP Scholarship as set out in clause 13;
  - (c) the recipient ceases to be enrolled in their course, without approved leave or suspension;
  - (d) the relevant faculty determines that the recipient:
    - (i) is not carrying out the course of study with competence and diligence;
    - (ii) is not maintaining satisfactory academic progress;

**Note:** See [Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2015](#).
  - (e) a finding is made against the recipient of:
    - (i) misconduct, under the [University of Sydney \(Student Discipline\) Rule 2016](#); or
    - (ii) code breach or research misconduct, under the [Research Code of Conduct](#).

**Note:** See clause 2.1 of the [University of Sydney \(Student Discipline\) Rule 2016](#) for the definition of misconduct. See clauses 18 and 19 of the [Research Code of Conduct 2013](#) for the definition of research misconduct and a code breach, respectively.
  - (f) the recipient, having commenced as an international student, becomes an Australian Permanent Resident.
    - (i) In such cases the recipient will be eligible to continue with an RTP Fee Offset and an RTP Stipend as a domestic student provided that they continue to meet progress requirements as identified in the annual progress review process.

**Note:** See [Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2015](#).
    - (ii) International students who obtain Australian permanent residence before or during the course of their enrolment at the University must notify Student Fees, Student Administration Services Office and HDRAC immediately upon issue of their Australian permanent resident visa.
- (2) HDRAC will inform a recipient of the termination of an RTP Fee Offset or an RTP Stipend under clause 23(1) by email to their University email address.

## 24 Grievance and review procedures

The [Resolution of Complaints Policy 2015](#) and the [Student Complaints Procedures 2015](#) apply to the award, administration and termination of RTP Scholarships.

## 25 Transitional arrangements

- (1) The University will offer each continuing scholarship student an RTP Scholarship in a form that:
  - (a) does not disadvantage them; and
  - (b) provides at least equivalent support to that provided, or which would have been provided, through the relevant predecessor Australian Government programs.
- (2) The duration of the RTP Scholarship will be considered as starting from the date the continuing scholarship student commenced their course of study.

## NOTES

### Research Training Program Scholarships Policy 2018

Date adopted: 2 October 2018

Date commenced: 5 November 2018

Administrator: Deputy Registrar

Review date: 2 October 2023

Rescinded documents:

Related documents:

*Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)*

*Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2017*

*University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule 2011*

*Essential Resources for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2016*

*Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2015*

*Student Recognition Awards Policy 2016*

*Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2013*

*Student Complaints Procedures 2015*

## AMENDMENT HISTORY

| <b>Provision</b> | <b>Amendment</b>  | <b>Commencing</b> |
|------------------|---|-------------------|
| 13(2)(c)         | Administrative amendment; delete “one period.” and replace with “two research periods.” | 8 November 2018   |