

## 2012 RESEARCH HIGHER DEGREE SCHOLARSHIP ROUND

### GUIDELINES

#### **Purpose**

To define research higher degree scholarship eligibility and outline the allocation and award of research higher degree scholarships to applicants as proposed by the Dean, Graduate Studies in consultation with Faculty Assistant Deans (Research Training) and approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

## 1. DEFINITIONS

**RHD:** Research Higher Degree (also known as Higher Degree by Research) is a postgraduate research degree namely a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

**ADRT:** Assistant Dean (Research Training).

**RHD Scholarship Ranking Committee** – ADRT's from each Faculty and Dean, Graduate Studies.

**OGS:** Office of Graduate Studies.

**IA:** International Admissions.

**DIISR:** Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

**APA:** Australian Postgraduate Award funded by the Commonwealth Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR).

**UNRSC:** University of Newcastle Postgraduate Research Scholarship – Central funded by the Research Division.

**UNRSC50:50:** University of Newcastle Postgraduate Research Scholarship – Central 50:50 funded equally by the Research Division and the Faculty.

**PUNRSC:** Provisional University of Newcastle Research Scholarship – Central which is identical to the UNRSC but is offered as part of an Honours Scholarship package to current domestic honours students and is conditional upon achieving Honours 1 and being offered admission into a RHD.

**IPRS:** International Postgraduate Research Scholarship funded by DIISR (previously known as Endeavour IPRS). The primary benefit of an IPRS is payment of institutional tuition fees. Students who are awarded an IPRS at the University of Newcastle will also be awarded an APA to provide for living expenses.

**UNIPRS:** University of Newcastle International Postgraduate Research Scholarship. The primary benefit of a UNIPRS is an exemption scholarship for tuition fees. Students who are awarded a UNIPRS must also be awarded a living allowance scholarship including Overseas Student Health Cover and equivalent benefits to a UNRSC. The living allowance scholarship may be in the form of a UNRSC, UNRSC50:50, UNRSE or APAL.

**Honours Scholarship:** \$1,000 scholarship with guaranteed PUNRSC funded by the Research Division. Available to successful, current domestic honours students.

**Current/Recent Honours Student (Relative to Opportunity):** A student either currently enrolled in an honours program including embedded honours programs or a student who completed honours in the previous year. For example, for the 2012 round a current/recent honours student will be one who was enrolled in an honours program in 2011 or 2010. In addition, recipients of a University Medal (from any Australian University) will be considered a Current Honours Student if they completed honours in 2009 or later. Applicants who provide evidence to claim disadvantage on the grounds of ill health, pregnancy, carer responsibilities or other legitimate reason will also be ranked as a Current Honours Student. All remaining applicants are ranked as **Other**.

## 2. AWARD OF SCHOLARSHIPS

The University will award research scholarships to eligible applicants according to the Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2008. APA scholarships must be awarded as

part of a competitive application process and to students who show exceptional research potential who will be enrolled in a Research Higher Degree at the University. IPRS scholarships must also be awarded as part of a competitive application process, however, they must also be allocated to students whose research project will be in an area of research strength for the University. In addition, at least one domestic scholarship (APA, UNRSC or UNRSC50:50) will be awarded to an eligible indigenous applicant wherever possible.

The University will award UNRSCs and UNRSC50:50's to eligible applicants based on Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2008 (Chapter 2) but with the following exceptions:

- recipients would not normally have previously held a postgraduate research scholarship of any kind for the same level of award, but if so, are limited to a maximum previous tenure of 12 months.
- UNRSCs and UNRSC50:50's may be awarded to students with Honours Class Two Division One if any remain after all eligible Honours Class One applicants have received a scholarship. The Dean of Graduate Studies will consider these on a case by case basis.

Up to 40 Honours Scholarships with PUNRSCs will be allocated across all Faculties to current Honours students according to academic merit and on the recommendation of the Faculty ADRT's.

The University will award UNIPRS scholarships to eligible applicants based on Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2008 (Chapter 3) but with the following exception

- recipients would not normally have previously held a postgraduate research scholarship of any kind for the same level of award, but if so, are limited to a maximum previous tenure of 12 months.

Scholarship holders are normally required to undertake their studies 'on campus', however candidates may study at other locations for periods of less than one semester to undertake activities such as fieldwork. In exceptional circumstances, and on the recommendation of the Head of School, approval may be granted by the Dean of Graduate Studies for a scholarship holder to undertake their studies as an 'off campus' candidate.

### **3. ALLOCATION OF SCHOLARSHIPS**

Up to 40 (subject to budget approval) equivalent full centrally funded scholarships will be allocated during the 2012 research scholarship round. IPRS scholarships will be offered first which includes a full UNRSC. The exact number of these is normally advised by DIISR in mid December. Eight IPRS's have been offered in previous years. Successful IPRS candidates will also be offered an APA living allowance scholarship. The 40 centrally funded scholarships (or up to 80 50:50 UNRSC's) will remain for allocation between international and domestic candidates.

#### **3.1. International applicants**

IPRS scholarships will be allocated first and according to the institution merit lists. UNRSC50:50 scholarships with UNIPRS's will be allocated next. Faculties nominate suitable candidates for UNIPRS and UNRSC50:50 scholarships based on the funding availability in the Faculty and on strategic research direction. Finally, if additional scholarship funds remain available, full UNRSC's with UNIPRS's will be allocated to applicants based on merit and in areas of research strength for the University.

#### **3.2. Domestic applicants**

APA's will be allocated first and according to the institution merit lists. Eligible APA applications with a scholarship score of 16 or higher will be automatically offered an APA without the need to go to the ranking meeting. A maximum of 60 APA's will be offered in this process until DIISR confirm actual APA numbers for 2012. After all APA's have been

awarded, any applicants remaining with a PUNRSC will be converted to a full UNRSC scholarship once Honours Class One results have been confirmed. UNRSC50:50 scholarships will be allocated next from Faculty nominations of suitable candidates based on the funding availability in the Faculty and on strategic research direction. Finally, if additional scholarship funds remain available, full UNRSC's will be allocated to applicants based on merit and in areas of research strength for the University.

Up to three of the top ranked APA applicants will also receive the Vice Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Research Candidates which is a scholarship supplementation of \$10,000 per annum for the duration of the APA.

Candidates who are offered an APA and who also receive a University Medal, will be eligible for a \$10,000 p.a. top up which will be funded 50% centrally and 50% from the Faculty. This is subject to Faculty participation in the initiative. If the candidate has also been nominated for a Vice Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Research Candidates, the University Medal top up will be reduced in accordance with the maximum top up allowed under the APA Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines.

#### **4. ELIGIBILITY**

An applicant must have been made an offer of admission to a research higher degree to be eligible for the offer of award of a research scholarship.

##### **4.1. Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)**

To be eligible for an APA, the Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2008 state that an applicant must:

- have completed a Bachelor Degree with First Class Honours, or be regarded as having an equivalent level of attainment
- be undertaking a Higher Degree by Research (HDR)
- be enrolled as a full-time student, unless approval has been given to hold a part-time APA
- be a domestic student
- not hold a Research Doctorate or a Research Masters degree or an equivalent research qualification, if undertaking a Research Masters
- not hold a Research Doctorate degree or an equivalent research qualification, if undertaking a Research Doctorate
- not previously have held an Australian Government-funded postgraduate research scholarship (excluding an International Postgraduate Research Scholarship, or its predecessor), unless it was terminated within six months of the scholarship's payments commencing
- not be receiving an equivalent award, scholarship or salary providing a benefit greater than 75% of the APA stipend rate to undertake the HDR.

Applicants enrolled in a research higher degree program who have completed more than two full-time equivalent semesters towards a research Master's or more than four full-time equivalent semesters towards a PhD at the commencement of the following academic year will not be considered for the award of a research scholarship

The University also requires candidates to work no more than eight hours per week, Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm to remain eligible for any research scholarship.

To be considered for a main round research scholarship a minimum scholarship GPA of 5.25 out of 7 is required (last 2 years of undergraduate degree). If additional applicants remain after all candidates meeting the eligibility have been offered a scholarship, the GPA requirement may be relaxed.

#### 4.2. International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS)

To be eligible for an IPRS, the Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2008 state that an applicant must be an overseas student and

- meet international student visa requirements as specified by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) including the requirement to purchase and maintain a standard Overseas Student Health Cover policy approved by the Commonwealth Government Department of Health and Ageing
- be commencing full-time enrolment for the first time in a RHD at an eligible scholarship provider in Australia under section 46-15 of the Act. Applicants may also be considered who have: commenced their RHD in the previous year but who, due to the timing of their application and subsequent enrolment, were unable to apply for an IPRS in that year; or commenced a RHD and terminated that enrolment within six months of commencement.
- be undertaking study in a **subject area identified by the provider as one of its areas of research strength**
- not hold a research qualification regarded by the provider to be equivalent to an Australian Research Doctorate degree or, if undertaking a Research Masters degree, not hold a research qualification regarded by the provider to be equivalent to or higher than an Australian Research Masters degree
- not have held an Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) scholarship within the two years prior to commencing the IPRS
- not be receiving a scholarship for which course tuition is a component under any other scholarship scheme to which the Australian Government makes a substantial contribution
- not previously have received an IPRS for a Research Doctorate degree, unless converting to a Research Masters degree
- not previously have received an IPRS for a Research Masters degree, unless that degree was completed and the student is immediately undertaking a Research Doctorate degree; or
- not previously have received an IPRS for a Research Masters degree, unless converting to a Research Doctorate degree.

International applicants who have been considered for a scholarship in a previous round who have also commenced their research program are ineligible to be considered again.

To be considered for a main round research scholarship a minimum scholarship GPA of 5.25 out of 7 is required (last 2 years of undergraduate degree). If additional applicants remain after all candidates meeting the eligibility have been offered a scholarship, the GPA requirement may be relaxed.

The University of Newcastle normally requires that the award of an IPRS will only be made to eligible international applicants who have met English Language requirements by the closing date for submission of scholarship applications. In exceptional circumstances the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or the President of Academic Senate may waive the English language requirements for an applicant for a research higher degree, on the recommendation of the appropriate Head of School, where:

- i. the applicant has been working in, or has been closely associated with the School for, a period of at least six months; and
- ii. the supervisor provides evidence that the applicant's oral and written command of English is sufficient to allow completion of the candidature in the normal time.

Where a scholarship applicant achieves a high scholarship score, but does not meet the English proficiency requirement due to not being able to sit for an IELTS before the closing date, a case can be made to the Dean of Graduate Studies to allow the application to be considered for scholarship. Any scholarship offer would then be conditional upon meeting the English proficiency prior to commencement.

## **5. FLEXIBILITY**

An ADRT can make a case to the RHD Scholarship Ranking Committee to allocate a central scholarship to an exceptional student who for some reason does not fit the formula driven calculation. The flexibility may take into account quality of publications and university attended.

## **6. TENURE**

Where a successful applicant has already completed part of the research degree, the period of scholarship support will be reduced accordingly.

## **7. TRANSFER OF SCHOLARSHIP**

APA/IPRS recipients at other institutions who wish to transfer to the University of Newcastle may only continue to receive their APA/IPRS if there is sufficient funding to do so. This will be determined by the Dean of Graduate Studies, external to the main round of scholarships. All other scholarship types are not transferable to or from another University.

## **8. SELECTION CRITERIA**

The research scholarship selection criteria for applicants are listed in the procedures document held in OGS. The research scholarship selection criteria will have components of academic achievement and research/scholarly attainments, relative to opportunity. If two applications are equally ranked, preference will be directed to a PhD applicant over a Masters Degree applicant.

## **9. CONFIDENTIALITY**

The deliberations and decisions of Faculties, Committees and/or delegated officers relating to allocation, selection and award of scholarships are confidential.

## **10. APPEALS PROCEDURE**

Applicants for research scholarships whose applications have been unsuccessful may lodge an appeal against the outcome. Appeals will only be considered on issues of administrative process, not against academic evaluations in the assessment of equivalent Honours status or the decisions of the Faculty or any committee in relation to the scoring process.

The appeal must be in writing, include a concise statement of the reasons for the appeal, and be lodged with the Dean of Graduate Studies, Office of Graduate Studies, the Chancellery, within 28 days of the date of the letter advising the outcome of the application for the scholarship.

The Dean and/or nominee(s) will review the application ensuring that assessors who were not involved in the original assessment are used. The review will take into account the applicant's reasons for the appeal, the information contained in the original application for a scholarship, and the current *Research Scholarships Guidelines* and *Research Higher Degree Scholarships Procedure*.

The outcome of the review will be reported to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), who will determine the outcome of the appeal as either:

- the procedures for scholarship selection *were* applied correctly, and the application is unsuccessful;
- the procedures for scholarship selection *were not* applied correctly, but the variation in the ranking of the application was not sufficient for the applicant to be awarded a scholarship, and the application is unsuccessful; or
- the procedures for scholarship selection *were not* applied correctly, and a scholarship will be awarded.

The outcome of the appeal will be determined within 28 days of the date of receipt of the written appeal.

## **11. DELEGATIONS AND RELAXING PROVISION**

If required, the Dean of Graduate Studies, or nominee, may act under delegated authority to resolve urgent matters relating to award of scholarships. In exceptional circumstances arising in a particular case, the Dean of Graduate Studies may relax any provision of these Guidelines other than those prescribed by the Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2008.

## **12. REVIEW**

There will be an annual review of the guidelines and procedures relating to the allocation and award of scholarships prior to the promulgation of guidelines for the subsequent year.