



PROCEDURES

Purpose

To define procedure for assessment, ranking and award of research higher degree scholarships 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 APAI.

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. ROLE OF FACULTIES

2.1. Honours Scholarships

Faculties will call for applications, assess, rank and advise OGS of recommended recipients of the Research Division Honours Scholarships of \$1,000 with automatic PUNRSC. Recipients must be domestic, currently enrolled in an Honours program at the University of Newcastle, have a strong GPA, be likely to achieve Honours Class One plus intend to commence a research higher degree in 2012.

2.2. Main Round Scholarships

Faculties will have responsibility for confirming the preliminary scholarship assessment score or recommending an alternate score with justification during the scholarship round and as per the timeline. Faculties will also nominate eligible international and domestic applicants for a UNRSC50:50 living allowance scholarship with confirmed funding via a 2012 UNRSC50:50 Scholarship Nomination form with matching UNIPRS if relevant.

3. ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ADMISSIONS

IA will receive applications from overseas applicants, complete preliminary admission processing, calculate the GPA*, evaluate overseas credentials, distribute and receive application packages to and from OGS and issue letters of offer of admission to candidature by the due date as advised by OGS. After scholarship offers have been made, IA will also organise the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE).

*Please see section 6 below for further information relating to GPA procedures.

4. ROLE OF OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The Executive Officer – Research Recruitment, Admissions and Scholarships will be responsible for research scholarship management, in consultation with the Dean, Graduate Studies and appropriate Faculty personnel.

Staff of OGS will service the research scholarship business activity. OGS will receive domestic applications, calculate the GPA (for domestic applicants), complete preliminary processing, complete the scholarship assessment form, distribute and receive application packages to and from Faculties, complete eligibility checks, issue offer of admission and offer of scholarship letters, receive acceptances/declines, re-offer scholarships and commence scholarship payments.

OGS will determine whether an award is to be an IPRS, UNIPRS, APA, UNRSC or UNRSC50:50 in consultation with the ranking committee and the DVC Research. OGS will also have responsibility for ensuring the University's compliance with DIISR requirements and Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2008.

OGS will provide lists to ADRT's of eligible applicants who can be nominated for UNRSC50:50 scholarships.

5. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Scholarship credential evaluation will be carried out in OGS prior to the progressive dispatch of applications to Faculties for assessment. Scholarship assessment forms must be approved by the Heads of Schools and Faculty ADRT to provide a consistent, structured assessment on the basis of qualifications, experience and accomplishments presented in the application, relative to opportunity (refer definitions). Faculties will return approved, scholarship assessed applications to OGS according to the timeline appended to this document. The final scholarship score will be subject to approval by the Dean, Graduate Studies and the Scholarship Ranking Committee.

5.1. Selection Criteria

Due to the volume of applications received in comparison to the number of government and Research Division scholarships available as well as government scholarship eligibility criteria, applications will be assessed using the following hurdle system.

1. Applications not received by 31 August, 2011 (international) or 31 October, 2011 (domestic) will be deemed ineligible and put into the 2013 round. If a supervisor wishes to fund a full scholarship for the student they are welcome to establish one however, the applicant will not be considered in the 2012 main round. All applications must be complete by the closing date. Supporting documentation received after the closing date may not be considered unless it is confirmation of a publication acceptance which can be accepted up until 30 November 2011. Applicants may elect to be considered in more than one discipline area. A separate application must be lodged for each discipline and each will be considered separately within the relevant School or Faculty. Offers of admission to candidature and scholarship are not automatically transferable to another discipline, School or Faculty.
2. Applications (international and domestic) who have not demonstrated meeting English by the closing date will be deemed ineligible and not assessed for scholarship. A list of the applicants not meeting English will be emailed to ADRT's as soon as available from IA in September. There will be an opportunity to make a case for relaxation of the English requirement at that time if warranted based on the English proficiency policy.
3. Applications that do not demonstrate any possible way of meeting Honours Class One equivalence e.g. have a low GPA and have no additional research attainments will not be assessed for scholarship as there are always excess numbers of applicants who are H1 equivalent.
4. All remaining applicants will have a full scholarship assessment. Scholarship assessment forms will be pre-filled by OGS with known information and will indicate whether the candidate is being assessed as a current/recent honours student or other (previous) honours student which includes candidates who have never attempted or completed honours. In the unlikely event that two applications are equally ranked (to three decimal places) for the last available scholarship, preference will be directed to a PhD applicant over a Masters applicant. Applications with a GPA of less than 5.25 out of 7 will be flagged as ineligible but will be assessed in case they are needed as reserves after all remaining eligible applicants have been awarded a scholarship. The scoring mechanism for the 2012 round will be:
 - a. The total scholarship score will be made up of:
 - i. **International Current**
GPA converted to a score out of 17
Publications out of 1.5
Experience out of 1.5
 - ii. **International Other**
GPA converted to a score out of 8
Publications out of 6
Experience out of 6

iii. Domestic Current

GPA converted to a score out of 17

Publications out of 1.5

Experience out of 1.5

iv. Domestic Other

GPA converted to a score out of 12

Publications out of 4

Experience out of 4

- b. For international applicants, if the School indicates that an applicant's research topic is in an area of research strength for the University (a PRC or other research centre) and the total scholarship score is above 16 out of 20, the application will be considered for IPRS (previously known as EIPRS).

Actual scoring of publications and extra attainments will be:

- International refereed journal article – 2 marks each
- National refereed journal article – 1 mark each
- Conference publication – 1 mark each (max 3)
- Major research exhibition – 2 marks each
- Minor research exhibition – 1 mark each
- Research master degree – 6 marks each
- Coursework master degree with 20% thesis component – 3 marks each
- Research work experience years – 1 mark per year (max 3)

6. GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA) CALCULATIONS

The Grade Point Average (GPA) used for scholarship assessment for both domestic and international candidates will be calculated on the last two full time equivalent years (e.g. 160 units for UoN students) of the Bachelor's degree excluding ungraded subjects but including fails. In exceptional circumstances, if the proposed supervisor and Head of School consider that this is not appropriate for a particular candidate, a case can be made to the Chair of the RHD Scholarship Ranking Committee for an alternative GPA score to be used. This proposed GPA score and justification should be submitted using the Alternate Scholarship GPA Score Form to the Executive Officer – Research Recruitment, Admissions and Scholarships at least two weeks prior to the ranking meeting.

7. CREDENTIAL EVALUATION

Honours 1 or equivalent is the threshold for consideration for the award of a scholarship. Attainments and/or qualifications that provide the evidence for Honours 1 equivalence such as publications or a research masters can also be given recognition in any other category. Honours 1 equivalence will be suggested by OGS where possible. If OGS cannot determine equivalence based on standard criteria, the proposed supervisor with approval from the Head of School should indicate equivalence (whether equivalent or not) on the Scholarship Assessment Form which will be approved by the Assistant Dean (Research Training).

If an applicant has two Bachelor degrees, the most **relevant** rather than the most recent degree is used. Any applicant without a Bachelor degree will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Dean of Graduate Studies or the RHD Scholarship Ranking Committee.

7.1. International qualifications

International qualifications will be assessed for comparability with Australian degrees on the basis of reference material from the National Office for Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) Guides, UK NARIC, the International Handbook of Universities and other resources used by IA. The assessments will be undertaken by staff in International Admissions. A Distinction level GPA (6/7) for an international undergraduate qualification is assessed as *equivalent to Honours 1*, provided that the degree is of at least four years duration.

7.2. Honours degree from an Australian university

Honours 1 or an equivalent Honours 1 qualification is required. Those whose qualifications and experience are assessed as less than equivalent to Honours 1 will not be eligible for a scholarship except where all eligible Honours 1 applicants have received a scholarship and there are a number of scholarships remaining. In the unlikely event that this does occur, otherwise eligible Honours 2 applications will be ranked and nominations accepted for 50:50 scholarships. APA's can only be awarded to candidates with Honours 1 or equivalent.

All candidates currently enrolled in Honours programs are eligible to apply for a research scholarship and will be ranked as if they have achieved Honours 1. Any offers issued will be conditional on obtaining Honours 1. If the applicant is deemed to be equivalent to Honours 1 the Head of School/ADRT must state the justification on the assessment sheet. Where equivalence remains uncertain, the RHD Scholarship Ranking Committee will make a determination.

7.3. Other qualifications that may meet equivalence requirements

Some applicants will present with a Bachelor degree and other qualifications. For the purpose of the scholarship application process, a research master degree is considered equivalent to Honours 1. Standard Honours 1 equivalency measures include: 2 refereed publications, a GPA of 6 out of 7 in a four year degree for international students (excluding those who have completed honours at an Australian University and who have an outright honours result), a coursework master degree with 20% thesis component and 1 year of research experience. Honours 1 equivalence for all other qualifications and attainments will be determined on a case by case basis by the Head of School and ADRT.

8. OFFER OF AWARDS

8.1. Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA) and University of Newcastle Research Scholarships Central (UNRSC).

In order to enable the timely despatch of scholarship offers and to secure high calibre domestic candidates, eligible domestic scholarship applicants who have a score of 16 or higher out of 20 that is confirmed by the Head of School and ADRT, will automatically be offered an APA without the need to go to the ranking meeting. This will apply to the first 60 processed until we receive confirmation from DIISR of the exact number of APA's available to UoN in 2012. The Scholarship Ranking Meeting will be held in early December to confirm the remaining APA's and the final ranking list. The RHD Scholarship Ranking Committee will confirm Honours 1 equivalence and scoring prior to the meeting and corroborate a ranked list of applicants based on academic merit. Committee members may review assessment applications for scholarships in Faculties other than their own if necessary. Recipients of a PUNRSC will be ranked in the institution merit lists and will be considered for an APA.

8.1.1. Top up for APA recipients who are awarded a University Medal

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 \$10,000 p.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.

8.2. International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) and University of Newcastle International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (UNIPRS)

The ADRT's will confirm Honours 1 equivalence and scoring prior to the ranking meeting and corroborate a ranked list of applicants based on academic merit. Successful IPRS applicants must normally arrive at the University of Newcastle to take up their IPRS by the commencement of semester 2, 2012, or the offer will be withdrawn.

9. EXTERNALLY FUNDED SCHOLARSHIPS (UNRS – External)

At other times of year, applicants who are nominated by the Faculty for a UNIPRS with UNRSE will be considered by the Dean of Graduate Studies and DVC Research. Award of UNIPRS is subject to meeting appropriate academic standards. Applications of unsuccessful candidates for a main round research scholarship will be made available to interested University staff seeking to award a scholarship funded from a research grant or other external funding source.

2012 Round Research Scholarship Timeline

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| August | University wide Honours Information Session |
| Wednesday 31 August | INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS CLOSE. |
| Friday 16 September | All International applications to have been assessed for admission and despatched to OGS for preliminary scholarship assessment. Applications will be despatched on a rolling basis. (12 working days from closing date) |
| Friday 30 September | All International applications to be pre-assessed for scholarship and despatched to faculties (9 working days from receipt) |
| Monday 17 October | All International applications to be returned from faculties to OGS for forwarding to IA for outcome letters (10 working days) |
| Monday 31 October | DOMESTIC APPLICATION CLOSE |
| Monday 14 November | All successful International applications, with offer letter issued and application outcome status entered in Nustar, to be forwarded to OGS in preparation for ranking meeting (20 working days). All Domestic applications to have been despatched to faculties with scholarship pre-assessment completed (9 working days). |
| Tuesday 22 November | International ranking meeting 9:30 am to 11:30 am – Committee Room (TBC) |
| ASAP after international ranking meeting | 1. DVC(R), DOGS meeting to confirm the two international ranking lists. 2. List of remaining eligible international applicants circulated to ADRTs for UNRSC50:50 nominations. |
| Monday 28 November | All domestic applications to have been returned to OGS from faculties (10 working days). |
| Tuesday 6 December | Domestic ranking meeting 9:30 pm to 11:30 pm – Committee Room (TBC) |
| ASAP after domestic ranking meeting | 1. DVC(R), and Dean of Graduate Studies meeting to confirm the two domestic ranking lists 2. List of remaining eligible domestic applicants circulated to ADRTs for nomination of a UNRSC50:50 living allowance scholarship. |
| As soon as scholarship numbers are advised by DIISR | 1. IPRS scholarship offer letters despatched 2. APA offer letters progressively despatched. |
| Friday 9 December | ADRTs/Faculties to advise OGS of any additional UNRSC50:50 scholarship nominations. |
| ASAP after all 9 December | DVC(R), and Dean of Graduate Studies meeting to consider nominations for both international and domestic UNRSC50:50 scholarships and allocate any remaining UNRSCs if applicable. |
| ASAP after DVCR approves/allocates 50:50's | International UNIPRS with UNRSC50:50 to be offered Domestic UNRSC 50:50's to be offered Any UNIPRS with UNRSCs to be offered if applicable Any domestic full UNRSCs to be offered if applicable Remaining unsuccessful international letters to be despatched Remaining unsuccessful domestic letters to be despatched |
| January 2012 | Subsequent International and Domestic offers to be made on rolling basis |