

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIAN POSTGRADUATE AWARDS (APA)**

2006 SCHOLARSHIP CONDITIONS

1.0 DEFINITIONS

1.1 In these conditions, unless the context or subject matter otherwise indicates or requires:

"APA" means an Australian Postgraduate Award;

"Research Training Committee" means the Research Training Committee of the Research Portfolio Committee;

"Pro Vice-Chancellor" means the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of enrolment of the scholar;

"program" means the course of study undertaken by the scholar;

"scholar" means the person awarded the scholarship;

"scholarship" means the APA awarded to the scholar;

"the University" means the University of Newcastle;

"DEST" means the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training;

"HECS" means Higher Education Contribution Scheme;

"RTS" means the Research Training Scheme.

* Denotes conditions which may be relaxed by the Dean, Graduate Studies

1.2 The Dean, Graduate Studies has delegated authority from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), to make determinations on research scholarship matters.

2.0 ELIGIBILITY

An APA is available to a student who will be undertaking an approved research Master's or Doctoral (PhD) degree at the University upon commencement of the award and who:

2.1 has completed a Bachelor Degree with First Class Honours or equivalent. (In determining an equivalent level of academic attainment, consideration may be given to previous study, relevant work experience, research publications, referees' reports and other research experience);

2.2 is an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen or an Australian permanent resident at the closing date for applications;

2.3 is enrolling as a full-time student or has approval from the Dean, Graduate Studies to undertake part-time study;

2.4 is not receiving an equivalent award, scholarship or salary providing a benefit greater than 75% of the APA base stipend rate to undertake the proposed program. Income earned from sources unrelated to the program of study is not subject to the 75% rule;

2.5 has not already completed a degree at the same level as the proposed candidature or at a higher level;

2.6 has not previously held an Australian Government-funded postgraduate research scholarship (APA or APA Industry) (excluding an Endeavour International Postgraduate Research Scholarship) unless it was terminated within six months of the commencement of benefits;

3.0 SELECTION*

3.1 Selection shall be undertaken by the Research Training Committee or its nominee(s).

3.2 Selection shall be on the basis of academic merit, and in accordance with policy approved by Academic Senate.

4.0 COMMENCEMENT

4.1 An APA may not be deferred to a subsequent year.

4.2 The student shall normally take up the scholarship by the commencement of semester one in the year of award.

4.3 In exceptional cases, the student may apply for approval from the Dean, Graduate Studies, to commence later, but must commence no later than the start of semester two in the year of award.

4.4 If the student has not commenced the scholarship by the date in clause 4.3 the APA will be withdrawn.

5.0 TENURE

- 5.1 A full-time APA may be held for two years to support a full-time Master's program or three years for a full-time PhD program.
- 5.2 A part-time APA holder is expected to progress at half the rate of a full-time award holder. A part-time APA may be approved where the applicant is able to demonstrate heavy carer commitments or a medical condition such as:
 - 5.2.1 Carer responsibilities for a pre-school child; or
 - 5.2.2 Carer responsibilities for school-aged children as a sole parent with limited access to outside support; or
 - 5.2.3 Carer responsibilities for an invalid or disabled spouse, child or parent; or
 - 5.2.4 A medical condition, which limits the capacity to undertake full-time study (supported by medical certification).
- 5.3 If a part-time APA is converted to a full-time APA then the period of time that the student is regarded as having been in receipt of the part-time APA immediately prior to the conversion will be halved for the purpose of determining the duration the student is regarded as having been in receipt of a full-time APA immediately after conversion.
- 5.4 If a full-time APA is converted to a part-time APA then the period of time that the student is regarded as having been in receipt of the full-time APA immediately prior to the conversion will be doubled for the purpose of determining the duration the student is regarded as having been in receipt of a part-time APA immediately after conversion.
- 5.5 A PhD APA holder may apply for a maximum extension of up to six months subject to satisfactory progress, provided the grounds are related to study and are beyond the control of the candidate.
 - 5.5.1 No extensions are possible for Master's scholars.
- 5.6 Periods of study already taken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the award will be deducted from the maximum period of tenure.
- 5.7 Conversion of program:
 - 5.7.1 A Master's APA holder may upgrade to a PhD award during the tenure of the scholarship, if upgrade of candidature is approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor or nominee. The award duration then becomes three years.
 - 5.7.2 A PhD APA holder may convert to a Master's award during the tenure of the scholarship, if conversion of candidature is approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor or nominee. The maximum award duration then becomes two years.
- 5.8 An APA holder completing a Master's degree may continue the award for PhD studies provided that there is no interval between Master's and Doctoral candidature, or that such an interval is covered by suspension of the award.
 - 5.8.1 Because an award normally expires on completion of the program, the scholar must ensure that the progression to PhD or suspension of the award is arranged before the Master's studies are completed. Note that:
 - 5.8.2 the maximum period of the award for a scholar progressing from Master's to PhD study is three years (or three and a half years if an extension is approved) from the date the scholar took up the award as a Master's student; and
 - 5.8.3 the scholar may undertake the PhD at a different institution from the Master's degree, provided the transfer of the award is arranged between the institutions before the Master's studies are completed.

6.0 TRANSFER OF AWARD OR PROGRAM

- 6.1 A scholarship can only be taken up at the University from which the student receives an offer of award and students are expected to complete their candidature at that University.
- 6.2 Students who transfer to another provider may continue to receive their APA only if their new provider agrees to its continuation and subject to the new provider having sufficient APA grant amounts of its own available. The new provider must ensure that it has received information from the former provider on any APA payment the student has received and the duration of the APA already consumed.

6.2.1 Transfer of University is not in itself sufficient grounds for the subsequent extension of scholarship.

6.3 Transfer of program: A scholarship may be transferred to another program of study subject to:

6.3.1 the student receiving formal approval for entry to that program by the Pro Vice-Chancellor or nominee;

6.3.2 the Dean, Graduate Studies', approval of the transfer of the scholarship to the new program.

6.3.3 transfer of program is not in itself sufficient grounds for the subsequent extension of scholarship.

7.0 SUSPENSION

7.1* Scholars may be granted up to twelve (12) months suspension of scholarship for any reason after twelve(12) months of scholarship.

7.2* In exceptional cases a further twelve (12) months may be granted by the Dean, Graduate Studies, for reasons which are outside the scholar's control. No suspension is possible beyond two (2) years in total.

7.3 Periods of approved suspension will not be deducted from the overall scholarship tenure if the scholar takes approved leave of absence from candidature for the duration of the suspension. Where a scholar does not take such approved leave of absence from candidature, the suspended period shall be deducted from the scholarship tenure.

7.3.1 Any leave of absence from candidature on a semester basis must be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor or nominee.

7.4 Periods of study undertaken towards the degree during suspension of the award will be deducted from the maximum period of the scholarship tenure.

8.0 EMPLOYMENT

8.1 The scholar shall not be *required* to undertake paid employment as a condition of award of the scholarship.

8.2 Scholars may, however, undertake a limited amount of part-time paid employment up to a maximum of eight hours per week (Monday - Friday) provided it does not interfere with their studies. Scholars should also note clause 2.4 above.

9.0 LEAVE

9.1 Recreation leave: Research scholars are entitled to up to 20 days paid recreation leave each year calculated on a pro-rata basis within the period of the scholarship. This may be accrued over the tenure of the scholarship. Any unused leave remaining when the scholarship is terminated or completed will be forfeited.

9.2 Sick leave: Research scholars are entitled to up to 10 days paid sick leave each year calculated on a pro-rata basis within the period of the scholarship. This may be accrued over the tenure of the scholarship.

9.2.1 For medically substantiated periods of illness lasting longer than ten days, scholars may receive up to a total of twelve weeks paid sick leave which are *additional* to the normal duration of the award.

9.2.2 Sick leave entitlements may also be extended to cover scholars with family responsibilities caring for sick children or relatives.

9.2.3 All applications for sick leave must be accompanied by medical certification.

9.3 Maternity leave: Students who have completed 12 months of their APA are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks paid maternity leave during the duration of the APA. Paid leave may also be approved if the student has adopted a child. Unpaid maternity leave may be accessed through the suspension provisions. Periods of paid maternity leave are in addition to the normal duration of the award. All applications for maternity leave must be accompanied by medical certification.

9.4 Parenting leave: Research scholars who are partners of women giving birth may receive up to two (2) weeks paid paternity leave for a childbirth occurring within the tenure of the award. Paid paternity leave may not be taken within the first twelve (12) months of an award; however unpaid paternity leave may be accessed through the suspension provisions. Paid paternity leave must be taken during the period three (3) weeks prior to the expected birth or placement of the child, and up to six (6) months after the actual birth or placement of the child. Periods of paid paternity leave are in addition to the normal duration of the award.

All applications for paternity leave must be accompanied by medical certification.

10.0 RESEARCH AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS*

10.1 Scholars may be eligible to receive scholarship benefits during periods of research at other institutions in Australia or overseas, if the research is essential for the completion of the scholar's program. The period shall not exceed 12 months (or 18 months for anthropology and other special cases), and is subject to the approval of the scholar's supervisor and the Dean, Graduate Studies.

10.1.1 Continuation of scholarship benefits is dependent upon approval by the Dean, Graduate Studies, for the period of off-campus study, and the scholar's continued enrolment in the program for which the award was granted at the University of Newcastle.

10.1.2 Approval of such continuation of scholarship benefits will not normally be given earlier than 6 months after commencement of the scholarship.

11.0 BENEFITS

11.1 Living allowance: an APA provides a full-time living allowance of \$19,231 p.a. Full-time living allowances are currently tax exempt, indexed annually and will be paid fortnightly through the University Payroll Office. Stipends for part-time APAs are taxable. The part-time living allowance is \$10,254 p.a.

11.2 All students who are awarded an APA for 2006 and do not already hold a HECS-exempt place, must be given priority when institutions allocate places under the RTS. This ensures that, where possible, APA holders will be granted a HECS exemption for the tenure of their award.

11.3* Relocation allowance (upon production of receipts): Scholars relocating to take up their award or on approved transfer are eligible for:

* travel expenses within Australia equivalent to the economy/student airfare for scholar, spouse and dependants to the University; or

* a per kilometre allowance for travel by car, as determined by the University, up to the equivalent airfare costs. Scholars cannot claim for accommodation or meal costs if elected to travel by car; and

* removal expenses of up to \$505 per adult and \$255 per child up to a maximum of \$1,455.

11.4* Thesis allowance: An allowance of up to \$500 (Masters or PhD) will be paid on production of receipts for costs associated with thesis production. The allowance must be claimed within one year of thesis submission and no more than two years after termination of the award. The amount paid will be up to the maximum rate applicable at the time of submission of the thesis. The allowance is a contribution to the costs of the production of the thesis and does not include such costs as purchase of computer equipment.

Thesis allowance is also payable on production of receipts for costs associated with the *resubmission* of a thesis, or the lodgement of the bound copy of the thesis following approval, provided that the claim is made within one year of the resubmission or lodgement date. The combined total of allowance for submission and resubmission must not exceed the maximum amount specified above.

12.0 TERMINATION

12.1 An APA will be terminated if any of the following conditions apply:

12.1.1 if the student ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in section 2.0 of these conditions, other than during a period in which the APA has been suspended or during a period of approved leave;

12.1.2 If, the University determines that, the program is not being carried out with competence and diligence, or in accordance with the offer of award, and no suitable alternative arrangements can be made for the continuation of the postgraduate degree;

12.1.3 If the University determines that the scholar has failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress;

12.1.4 On the expiry of the period for which the scholarship was granted or 14 days after submission of the thesis, whichever is the earlier;

12.1.5 If the scholar does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of suspension or does not make arrangements to extend that period of suspension;

12.1.6 On the death, incapacity, written resignation or withdrawal from enrolment of the scholar;

12.1.7 When the scholar ceases to be a full-time student and when approval has not been obtained to hold the award on a part-time basis (but not when the scholar is to revert to full-time study after an approved period of part-time study);

12.1.8 If the University determines that the scholar is guilty of serious misconduct.

12.2 If an APA is terminated, it cannot be re-activated unless the termination occurred in error

13.0 OBLIGATIONS

13.1 The scholar shall accept the award of the scholarship subject to these conditions and shall agree to abide by the conditions.

13.2 The scholarship conditions which have been agreed between the University and the scholar shall normally not be varied during the tenure of a scholarship.

13.2.1 Where the Dean, Graduate Studies does approve variations of conditions the scholar shall have the option to accept the amended conditions or to retain the original conditions.

13.2.2 No scholar will suffer disadvantage because of any variation to conditions.

13.3 The scholar is required to conform to the Rules of the University governing their program (including disciplinary provisions).

13.4 The University shall provide a code of supervisory practice for research higher degrees.

14.0 APPEAL

14.1 Students and scholars have the right of appeal against decisions taken by the Dean, Graduate Studies, or their nominated representatives, on the grounds that the procedures followed were deficient. Written appeals shall be submitted to the Manager, Graduate Studies, within 21 days of notification of a decision of the Dean, Graduate Studies.

15.0 RELAXATION CLAUSE

15.1 In order to provide for exceptional circumstances arising in a particular case, the Dean, Graduate Studies, may relax any provision of these conditions, except those specifically expressed as conditions as advised by DEST.
