

RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM (RTP) SCHOLARSHIP

RTP STIPEND AND RTP ALLOWANCE

DOMESTIC CONDITIONS OF AWARD 2021

1. Overview

1.1. The main objectives of the Research Training Program (RTP) are to:

- a) provide flexible funding arrangements to support the training of domestic candidates and overseas candidates undertaking Higher Degrees by Research at Australian Higher Education Providers;
- b) deliver graduates with the skills required to build careers in academia and other sectors of the labour market;
- c) support collaboration between Higher Education Providers and industry and other research end-users; and
- d) support overseas candidates undertaking Higher Degrees by Research at Australian Higher Education Providers.

1.2. It is the principal program of the Commonwealth Government for supporting promising researchers, with awards available in all fields of study. The program is administered by the University of Tasmania (the University) and the Commonwealth Department of Education. The University pays award holders all entitlements under the award.

1.3. The University has offered you a:

- a) *RTP Stipend* to assist you with your living costs while undertaking the Higher Degree by Research;
- b) *RTP Allowance* to assist you with costs associated with relocating to Tasmania to undertake your Higher Degree by Research; and
- c) *RTP Fees Offset* paid to the University by the Commonwealth Government to cover the costs of tuition fees.

2. Eligibility

2.1. To be eligible for a *RTP Stipend*, and *RTP Allowance* a candidate must be either a *domestic candidate* or an *overseas candidate* enrolled in an accredited Higher Degree by Research at the University.

- 2.2. To be eligible for a *RTP Stipend* a candidate must not be receiving income from another source to support the candidate's general living costs while undertaking their Higher Degree by Research if that income is greater than 75 per cent of the candidate's *RTP Stipend* rate. Income unrelated to the candidate's course of study (e.g. employment income) or income received for the candidate's course of study but not for the purpose of supporting general living costs will not be taken into account.
- 2.3. To be eligible for a RTP Fees Offset a candidate must not be receiving an equivalent award or scholarship from the Commonwealth Government designed to offset tuition fees for their Higher Degree by Research.
- 2.4. In 2021 all domestic applicants will be offered an RTP Fees Offset provided they are not receiving an equivalent award or scholarship from the Commonwealth designed to offset Higher Degree by Research tuition fees.
- 2.5. RTP Scholarship awardees are required to accept and commence by the dates stated in their letter of offer. If an awardee wishes to delay the date of commencement, a formal application must be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Research for approval, including a justification for the delay, a proposed new date of enrolment and a letter of support from the primary supervisor. A delayed commencement beyond 1 December 2021 will not be approved. If the awardee does not enrol and commence by the maximum commencement date stated on their letter of offer and permission to delay commencement is not granted, then the offer will be withdrawn.
- 2.6. The period of support of a RTP Scholarship is always subject to the awardee making satisfactory academic progress and terminates on the expiry of the Award or on submission of the thesis for examination, whichever is the sooner.

3. RTP Stipend

- 3.1. *RTP stipends* are awarded on a competitive basis.
- 3.2. In its competitive selection process, the University will give priority to applicants who:
- hold an Australian or New Zealand bachelor's degree with first class honours or qualifications and/or research experience deemed equivalent by the University,
 - have a proposed project in an area identified by the University as one of research strength,
 - have not already completed a Doctoral degree or equivalent,
 - have not already completed a Master of Research degree or equivalent unless intending to undertake a Doctoral degree, and/or
 - have not previously held an Australian Government or University-funded Postgraduate Research Award for more than six months.

Applicants who do not satisfy some or all of the above will be considered in the competitive selection process, but will not be prioritised against other applicants who have.

Part-time stipends may be available (see section 10 for eligibility requirements).

4. RTP Stipend rate

4.1. In 2021 *RTP stipends* will be at the following rates:

- a) Full-time AUD\$28,597pa (non-taxable)
- b) Part-time AUD\$14,299pa (taxable)

4.2. The stipend rate for any subsequent year are the same as that for the preceding year, indexed in accordance with the method set out in Part 5-6 of the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#).

5. RTP Stipend period of support

5.1. The period of support is calculated from the date of enrolment in the Higher Degree by Research, except where the RTP Scholarship is awarded after commencement of candidature (see 5.4).

5.2. The *RTP Stipend* period of support is:

- a) *Doctoral Candidates*: three years and six months at a full-time candidate load and seven years at a part-time candidate load.
- b) *Master of Research Candidates*: two years at a full-time candidate load and four years at a part-time candidate load.

5.3. A candidate's period of support will be increased pro-rata for those periods of paid leave stipulated in section 14 and approved by the University.

5.4. The period of support of a *RTP Stipend* will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the *RTP Stipend*.

5.5. There are no provisions for *RTP Stipend* extension.

6. RTP Fees Offset

6.1 An RTP Fees Offset is awarded to all domestic candidates enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research at the University of Tasmania.

6.2 In 2021 the Domestic RTP Fees Offset rate will be in the range of AUD\$28,000 - \$40,000.

6.3 RTP Fees Offset rates will increase in subsequent years.

7. RTP Fees Offset Period of Support

7.1 The period of support is calculated from the date of enrolment in the Higher Degree by Research.

7.2 The RTP Fees Offset period of support is:

- a) Doctoral Candidates: four years at a full-time candidate load and eight years at a part-time candidate load.
- b) Master of Research Candidates: two years at a full-time candidate load and four years at a part-time candidate load.

7.3 There are no provisions for *RTP Fees Offset* extensions for candidates undertaking a Doctoral degree or Master of Research.

8. RTP Allowances

8.1. Relocation allowance:

Award holders may apply for a one-off relocation allowance towards the cost of relocating to Hobart, Launceston or the Cradle Coast campus from within Australia or from overseas to take up an Award. Claims may be submitted once travel has been completed and a candidate has commenced. Claims must be made within six months of the date of commencement of the award.

The allowance covers one way travel expenses for the award holder, any dependent spouse/partner and dependent children, equivalent to the cheapest student or economy airfare to Hobart, Launceston or Burnie. Where an award holder elects to travel by car, they will receive a per kilometre allowance as determined by the University. Award holders cannot claim for accommodation, rental bond or meal costs as part of the relocation allowance.

Award holders can be reimbursed for up to AUD\$2,000 in total upon production of receipts.

8.2 Other allowances:

Award holders may also receive minor awards, allowances or other earnings which are supplementary to the award, or income derived from part-time employment in accordance with section 13.

9. Transfer between Higher Degrees by Research

- 9.1. The University may approve, on the recommendation of the Dean of Graduate Research, the transfer of a *RTP Stipend* from a Master of Research degree to a Doctoral degree or from a Doctoral degree to a Master of Research degree. The period of support of a transferred *RTP Stipend* becomes that for the new Higher Degree by Research reduced by periods of equivalent FTE (full-time enrolment) undertaken towards the related degree prior to the transfer.

10. Part-time Awards

10.1. Part-time awards may be awarded to domestic candidates.

- 10.2. In making an assessment of an application for a part-time award the following will be considered:
- a) whether the School of Enrolment has sufficient resources to facilitate completion of candidature with respect to supervision, funding and access to relevant facilities; and
 - b) whether any thesis submitted by the revised expiry of the maximum degree period will as a body of work still form a supervised, independent and significant contribution to knowledge.
- 10.3. Part-time awards may also be available to eligible candidates with heavy carer commitments or with a medical condition precluding full-time study may be permitted to hold a *RTP Stipend* on a part-time basis. The award holder must demonstrate:
- a) carer responsibilities for a pre-school child;
 - b) carer responsibilities for school aged children as a sole parent with limited access to outside support;
 - c) carer responsibilities for an invalid or disabled spouse, child or parent;
 - d) a medical condition which limits the capacity to undertake full-time study (supported by medical certification); or
 - e) other circumstances which limits the candidate's capacity to undertake full-time study.
- 10.4. A part-time *RTP Stipend* awardee must be enrolled as a part-time candidate and is expected to progress at half the rate of a full-time awardee. Awardees approved to study part-time may revert to full-time study subject to the approval of the Supervisor, Graduate Research Coordinator, Head of School and Dean of Graduate Research.
- 10.5. Part-time *RTP Stipends* are not available to applicants seeking to undertake paid employment on a full-time or on a substantial part-time basis. The same employment conditions that apply to full-time awardee apply to part-time awardees.
- 10.6. Stipends for part-time awards are not tax exempt.
- 10.7. Applicants for part-time awards must provide a statement of reasons for requesting to undertake part-time study with their application form. The Dean of Graduate Research will consider these statements, along with a supporting statement from the applicant's supervisor and other relevant information. Note that the scheme is merit-based and within eligibility guidelines, rankings of applicants are unaffected by their personal financial circumstances or care responsibilities.
- 10.8. Existing award holders may also seek approval to study part-time. Their requests, with the same supporting documentation as for new applicants, should be submitted to the University as they arise.

11. Transfer of an RTP Scholarship

- 11.1. An RTP Scholarship can only be taken up at the university at which the application was lodged and candidates are expected to complete their candidature at that university.
- 11.2. Where a candidate seeks to transfer from one university to another during the tenure of their RTP scholarship, the candidate must discuss with the receiving university whether that university is prepared to continue the RTP Scholarship support as RTP funding is not transferred between institutions.

12. Termination

- 12.1. The University will terminate a candidate's RTP Scholarship once the thesis is submitted for examination or at the end of the Award, whichever is earlier. Awards will be terminated before this time:
 - a) if, after due inquiry, the University concludes that the Award holder has not fulfilled obligations, met the eligibility criteria or made satisfactory progress;
 - b) if, in the opinion of the institution, the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of award;
 - c) if, after due inquiry, the University concludes that the candidate has committed serious misconduct, including but not limited to the provision of false or misleading information;
 - d) when the candidate ceases to be full-time and when approval has not been obtained to hold the award on a part-time basis;
 - e) if the award holder does not resume study following a period of suspension or make arrangements to extend that suspension;
 - f) if the award holder takes unapproved leave from their candidature, with no response to attempts at communication by the University;
 - g) if the award holder fails to participate in a formal review of progress and does not respond to reasonable requests to do so;
 - h) if an award holder fails to confirm their candidature within their first twelve months of equivalent full-time candidature or make arrangements for an extension to their confirmation of candidature due date; or
 - i) on the death or incapacity of the candidate, or withdrawal from the program.
- 12.2. If an RTP Scholarship is terminated, it cannot be re-activated unless the termination occurred in error.

13. Employment (paid or voluntary work)

- 13.1. A candidate is expected to spend the following hours per week progressing their candidature:
- a) 38 hours when enrolled full-time; or
 - b) an average of 19 hours when enrolled part-time.
- 13.2. Full time candidates - an award holder may undertake limited work experience or employment during candidature provided it:
- a) does not interfere with the timely progression and completion of their research project;
 - b) does not exceed on average over a 12-month period, 20% of a full-time load i.e. 365 hours per annum (this does not apply to work undertaken outside of the 38 hours per week that is dedicated to the research project);
 - c) is documented in an updated Research Plan; and
 - d) is endorsed by the academic unit
- 13.3. Part-time candidates - part-time scholarship holders are expected to commit 19 hours per week to their research and must ensure that the work/study balance does not interfere with the progress of the research. Full-time employment will not be a permissible reason to hold a part-time award.
- 13.4. A candidate's award may be terminated or they may be placed on probation if the University does not consider that their progress is satisfactory.

14. Leave entitlements

Paid Leave

- 14.1. *Annual leave* - candidates are entitled to 20 working days paid recreation leave each year calculated on a pro-rata basis. These leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the *RTP Stipend* but will be forfeited when the *RTP Stipend* is terminated. The agreement of the Primary Supervisor and Head of School must be obtained before leave is taken. Annual leave does not increase the overall period of support.
- 14.2. *Sick leave* - Master of Research and Doctoral candidates may take up to ten working days paid sick leave a year and this may be accrued over the tenure of the award but will be forfeited when the *RTP Stipend* is terminated. Paid sick leave does not increase the overall period of support.
- 14.3. *Additional sick leave* - candidates are entitled to receive additional paid sick leave of up to a total of 84 days (pro-rata for part-time candidates) during the duration of the *RTP Stipend* for periods of illness where the candidate has insufficient sick leave entitlements available under

paragraph 14.2, provided that a medical certificate has been provided by the candidate to the University. Periods of additional sick leave are additional to the normal duration of the RTP Scholarship. Additional periods of leave may also be accessed as unpaid leave as defined at section 14.8.

- 14.4. *Family caring responsibilities* - sick leave entitlements (including additional sick leave) may also be used to cover leave for candidates with family caring responsibilities, subject to the usual practice of the University and in accordance with the [HDR Candidature Management and Enrolment Variation Procedure](#).
- 14.5. *Maternity leave* - candidates who have completed 12 months of their *RTP Stipend* are entitled to a maximum of 84 days (pro rata for part-time candidates) paid maternity leave during the duration of the *RTP Stipend*. Paid leave may also be approved if the candidate has adopted a child. Periods of paid maternity leave are additional to the normal duration of the RTP Scholarship. Additional maternity leave may also be accessed as unpaid leave as defined at section 14.8.
- 14.6. *Parental leave* - candidates who are partners of women giving birth or adopting a child and who have completed 12 months FTE of their award, may take up to a maximum of 14 days (pro-rata for part time candidates) paid leave during a period through 1 week before the expected birth/adoption date and 5 weeks after the birth/adoption of the child. This leave can be taken only once during the tenure of the award but additional parental leave may be accessed as unpaid leave through the suspension provisions. Paid parental leave is additional to the normal duration of the RTP Scholarship.
- 14.7. Applications endorsed by the Primary Supervisor and Head of School should be lodged with the Graduate Research Office.

Unpaid Leave

- 14.8. Award holders may apply for period of unpaid leave. The end date of the Award will be adjusted to account for the period of unpaid leave approved by the University.
- 14.9. The total period of suspension from the Award during its duration generally may not exceed 12 months. However, in exceptional circumstances where the recipient of the award can demonstrate reasons outside their control, additional periods of suspension may be granted. Only under exceptional circumstances will suspension be possible beyond two years in total.
- 14.10. *Unpaid maternity leave* – candidates who have not completed 12 months of their *RTP Stipend* or who wish to take a period of unpaid maternity leave in addition to the period of paid maternity leave may apply for an unpaid leave of absence.
- 14.11. Applications for suspension, endorsed by the supervisor, Graduate Research Coordinator and Head of School, should be made on the appropriate form and lodged with the Graduate Research Office in line with the [HDR Candidature Management and Enrolment Variation Procedure](#).

15. Appeals

- 15.1. The appeal mechanism for resolution of disputes which may arise during candidature are described in the [Research Training Ordinance](#). Appeals against decisions concerning the allocation of Awards must be made in writing to the Dean of Graduate Research within 14 days of the applicant being notified of the decision. The Dean shall consider the case made by the applicant and convey its decision to the applicant. The applicant may, within 14 days of notification of the decision, lodge a written appeal against such decision for consideration by the Appeals Committee. All correspondence is to be via the Graduate Research Office.

16. Research overseas

- 16.1 The candidate may be permitted to undertake fieldwork or research overseas when this is considered necessary by the supervisor and Head of School. Applications for overseas study should be lodged with the Graduate Research Office prior to commencement of the overseas study in accordance with the [HDR Candidature Management and Enrolment Variation Procedure](#).
- 16.2 The Award holder will not generally be allowed to undertake overseas study in the first six months FTE of scholarship duration. Candidature undertaken prior to the taking up of the scholarship will be taken into account in determining the earliest date on which the candidate may pursue paid overseas study.

17 Research at other organisations

- 17.1 The University may permit a candidate to conduct part of their research at other organisations provided that there is adequate support and supervision for the Award holder.

18 Other courses

- 18.1 An Award holder may not engage in any academic course of study leading to a qualification which is not an essential part of the Award holder's Higher Degree by Research.

19 Payment of stipend

- 19.1 Stipends are paid fortnightly and must be paid into an Australian bank account (with an Australian authorised deposit-taking institution) in the candidate's name.

20 Recovery of monies owed

- 20.1 The University shall be entitled to recover money owed by candidates arising from payment of a scholarship or allowance to which the candidate is not entitled.
- 20.2 It is the responsibility of the candidate to be aware of their entitled scholarship and notify the Graduate Research Office should their received entitlements differ from their offer.

21 Specific obligations of Award holders

- 21.1 The Award holder shall diligently and to the best of their ability apply themselves to the successful completion of the degree.
- 21.2 The Award holder shall abide by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committees of the University.
- 21.3 The Award holder is required to conform to the regulations and statutes (including disciplinary provisions) of the University and to the rules and procedures of research higher degrees.
- 21.4 The Award holder must provide all reports required by the University including an annual review of progress submitted through the supervisor and Head of School. If the University does not consider that progress is satisfactory, the Award may be terminated or the holder placed on probation.
- 21.5 The Award holder is responsible for seeking independent taxation advice in relation to their scholarship.
- 21.6 Acknowledgement of Australian Government support
 - 21.6.1 Award holders are required to acknowledge the Commonwealth Government's support in any published materials related to your Higher Degree by Research. This relates to any time, both during and after completion of the award holder's Higher Degree by Research. Materials include items such as the thesis or exegesis, books, articles, newsletters or other literary or artistic works which relate to the award holder's Higher Degree by Research project.
 - 21.6.2 The acknowledgement must be in a prominent place and in an appropriate form. The acknowledgement must include the mention of the award holder's support through an "Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship".