

## RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM (RTP) SCHOLARSHIP RTP STIPEND, RTP ALLOWANCE, and RTP FEES OFFSET CONDITIONS OF AWARD 2024

### 1. OVERVIEW

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

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

The RTP is the principal program of the Commonwealth Government for supporting promising researchers, with scholarships 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 scholarship holders all leave entitlements under the scholarship.

The University has offered you an:

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

This scholarship does not cover the [Student Services and Amenities Fee \(SSAF\)](#). All domestic Higher Degree by Research candidates are liable for SSAF as determined by the University.

### 2. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for an *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.

To be eligible for an *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.

To be eligible for an *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.

In 2024 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.

Scholarship holders are required to accept and commence by the dates stated in their letter of offer. Requests to delay the date of commencement should be submitted in line with the [HDR Admissions Selection Enrolment Procedure](#). A delayed commencement beyond 12 months from the date of original offer will not be approved.

The period of support of a scholarship is always subject to the scholarship holder making satisfactory academic progress and terminates on the expiry of the scholarship or on submission of the thesis for examination, whichever is the sooner. A candidate's scholarship may be terminated or they may be placed on a Candidature Support Plan if the University does not consider their progress satisfactory.

### 3. RTP STIPEND

*RTP Stipends* are awarded on a competitive basis.

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; and/or,
- have not already completed a Masters by Research degree or equivalent unless intending to undertake a Doctoral degree.

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

*RTP Stipends* are paid fortnightly in arrears, from commencement of candidature, and must be paid into an Australian bank account (with an Australian authorised deposit-taking institution) in the candidate's name.

### 4. RTP STIPEND RATE

Full-time candidates receive an *RTP Stipend* at the rate of AUD\$32,192pa non-taxable (2024 rate, indexed annually).

Part-time candidates may receive an *RTP Stipend* (in specific circumstances) paid at the rate of AUD\$16,096pa taxable (2024 rate, indexed annually).

The *RTP Stipend* rate for any subsequent year is 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](#).

See also: section 10 STUDY LOAD

### 5. RTP STIPEND PERIOD OF SUPPORT

The period of support is calculated from the date of enrolment in the Higher Degree by Research, except where the *RTP Stipend* is awarded after commencement of candidature.

The duration of the *RTP Stipend* is 3 years and 6 months full-time equivalent (FTE) for a Doctoral candidate and 2 years FTE for a Masters by Research candidate. There are no provisions for an extension.

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.

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

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

### 6. RTP ALLOWANCES

#### **Relocation Allowance:**

Scholarship holders may apply for a one-off relocation allowance of up to AUD\$2,000 in total towards the cost of relocating to Hobart, Launceston, or the Cradle Coast from within Australia or from overseas to take up the award.

The relocation allowance covers one way travel expenses for the scholarship holder, any dependent spouse/partner and dependent children, equivalent to the cheapest economy airfare to Hobart, Launceston, or Burnie. Where a scholarship holder elects to travel by car, they will receive a per kilometre allowance as determined by the University.

Claims for a relocation allowance must be submitted:

- once travel has been completed and the scholarship holder has been enrolled;
- within 6 months of the date of commencement of the scholarship; and,
- via the HDR Relocation Claim form in the Service Portal accompanied by electronic copies of receipts.

Scholarship holders cannot claim for accommodation, rental bond or meal costs as part of the relocation claim.

The relocation allowance is paid as a lump sum into an Australian bank account (with an Australian authorised deposit-taking institution) in the candidate's name.

## 7. RTP FEES OFFSET RATE

An **RTP Fees Offset** is awarded to all domestic candidates enrolled in a Higher Degree by Research at the University of Tasmania. In 2024 the Domestic *RTP Fees Offset* rate will be in the range of AUD\$33,450 - \$46,250 per annum.

## 8. RTP FEES OFFSET PERIOD OF SUPPORT

The period of support is calculated from the date of enrolment in the Higher Degree by Research, except where the *RTP Fees Offset* is awarded after commencement of candidature.

The maximum duration of the *RTP Fees Offset* is 4 years FTE for a Doctoral candidate and 2 years FTE for a Masters by Research candidate. There are no provisions for an extension.

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

The period of support of an *RTP Fees Offset* will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken towards the degree prior to commencement of the scholarship.

## 9. TRANSFER BETWEEN HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH

The Dean of Graduate Research may approve, on the recommendation of the School of Enrolment, the internal transfer of an *RTP Stipend* from a Masters by Research degree to a Doctoral degree or from a Doctoral degree to a Masters by Research degree.

If you transfer from a Masters by Research degree to a Doctoral degree, the maximum duration of your *RTP Stipend* will be 3.5 years FTE from the date that you commenced the Masters by Research degree.

If you transfer from a Doctoral degree course to a Masters by Research degree, the maximum duration of your *RTP Stipend* will be 2 years FTE from the date that you commenced the Doctoral degree. If your scholarship has already been held for more than 2 years FTE, it will cease on the date of transfer.

## 10. STUDY LOAD

The scholarship is conditional on maintaining full-time enrolment in your program of study at the University of Tasmania.

A candidate will be expected to spend the following hours per week progressing their candidature:

- 38 hours when enrolled full-time; or
- an average of 19 hours when enrolled part-time.

Candidates with caring commitments or with a medical condition precluding full-time study may apply to hold an *RTP Stipend* on a part-time basis. In assessing an application for a part-time *RTP Stipend*, the Dean of Graduate Research will consider the following:

- the reason/s and evidence provided for the request;
- whether the School of Enrolment has sufficient resources to facilitate completion of candidature with respect to supervision, funding, and access to relevant facilities; and,

- whether the thesis submitted by the revised expiry of the maximum degree period would be a viable thesis as defined in the [Research Training Ordinance](#).

Employment will generally not be a permissible reason to hold a part-time *RTP Stipend*. Under exceptional circumstances, requests for a part-time *RTP Stipend* while employed part-time may be considered by the Dean of Graduate Research.

A part-time scholarship holder must be enrolled as a part-time candidate and is expected to progress at half the rate of a full-time scholarship holder. Scholarship holders approved to study part-time may apply to revert to full-time study at any time.

Under Australian Taxation Law part-time stipends are taxable. Candidates should seek independent taxation advice as the University cannot provide advice regarding taxation.

See also: Section 11 EMPLOYMENT DURING CANDIDATURE

## 11. EMPLOYMENT DURING CANDIDATURE

### Full-time candidates

A full-time candidate may undertake *limited* work experience or employment during candidature provided it:

- does not interfere with the timely progression and completion of their research project;
- 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);
- is documented in an updated Research Plan; and
- is endorsed by the academic unit.

### Part-time candidates

Unless otherwise approved by the Dean of Graduate Research, recipients of a part-time scholarship are subject to the same restrictions on employment as full-time scholarship holders (listed above).

See also: Section 10 STUDY LOAD

## 12. TRANSFER OF AN RTP SCHOLARSHIP

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.

Where a candidate seeks to transfer from one university to another during the tenure of their scholarship, the candidate must discuss with the receiving university whether that university is prepared to continue scholarship support as RTP funding is not transferable between institutions.

## 13. TERMINATION

The University will terminate a candidate's scholarship once the thesis is submitted for examination or at the end of the scholarship, whichever is earlier. Scholarships will be terminated before this time if, after due inquiry, the Dean of Graduate Research concludes that:

- the scholarship holder has not fulfilled obligations, met the eligibility criteria, or made satisfactory progress;
- the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of award;
- the candidate has committed serious misconduct, including but not limited to the provision of false or misleading information;
- the candidate ceased to be full-time and did not obtain approval to hold the RTP scholarship on a part-time basis;
- the candidate did not resume study following a period of suspension nor make arrangements to extend that suspension;
- the candidate took unapproved leave from their candidature, with no response to attempts at communication by the University;

- the candidate failed to participate in a formal review of progress and did not respond to reasonable requests to do so;
- the candidate failed to confirm their candidature within the first twelve months FTE of candidature, or make arrangements for an extension to their confirmation of candidature due date; or
- the candidate is unable to progress due to incapacity or death, or withdrawal from the program.

## 14. LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

### PAID LEAVE

Leave entitlements are pro-rated for part-time candidates.

#### Annual Leave

- Candidates are entitled to 20 working days paid recreation leave each year (accruable). This period does not extend the normal duration of the scholarship, and any accrued leave will be forfeited when the scholarship is terminated.
- The academic unit will manage the application for and granting of annual leave provisions at their discretion.
- The agreement of the Supervisor must be obtained before leave is taken.

#### Sick Leave

- Candidates are entitled to 10 working days paid sick leave a year (accruable). This period does not extend the normal duration of the scholarship, and any accrued leave will be forfeited when the scholarship is terminated.
- The academic unit will manage the application for and granting of the 10 working days sick leave provision at their discretion.

#### Medical and Carer's Leave

- For medically substantiated periods of illness lasting longer than ten working days candidates may receive up to a total of 12 weeks paid leave, which can include medical and carer's leave.
- Periods of paid medical and carer's leave are additional to the normal duration of the scholarship.
- Applications for medical and carer's leave must be submitted via the Service Portal, accompanied by medical certification and endorsed by the Supervisor, Graduate Research Coordinator, and Head of School.

#### Parental Leave

- Scholarship holders may take up to a maximum of 12 weeks paid parental leave for candidates who give birth to a child, or are the primary caregiver for a newborn child (including surrogacy arrangements) or a newborn child placed with them for adoption or permanent care, during their degree period.
- Paid parental leave may only be taken once and may not be taken within the first 12 months of the scholarship (unpaid parental leave may also be accessed in addition to paid leave, see below).
- Periods of paid parental leave are additional to the normal duration of the scholarship.
- Applications for parental leave must be submitted via the Service Portal, accompanied by medical certification and endorsed by the Supervisor, Graduate Research Coordinator, and Head of School.

#### Partner Leave

- Candidates whose partner has given birth or who is the main carer of the newborn child placed with them for adoption or permanent care and who have completed 12 months of their scholarship, may take up to a maximum of 2 weeks paid leave during a period through 1 week before the expected birth, adoption or permanent placement of the newborn child and 5 weeks after the birth, adoption or permanent placement of the newborn child.
- This leave can be taken only once during the tenure of the scholarship (additional partner leave may be accessed as unpaid leave, see below).
- Paid partner leave is additional to the normal duration of the scholarship.
- Applications for partner leave must be submitted via the Service Portal, accompanied by a medical certification and endorsed by the Supervisor, Graduate Research Coordinator, and Head of School.

### UNPAID LEAVE

Scholarship holders may apply for periods of unpaid leave.

- Candidates who have not completed 12 months of their scholarship or who wish to take a period of unpaid parental or partner leave in addition to the period of paid parental or partner leave, may apply for an unpaid leave of absence.
- The total period of leave from the scholarship during its duration generally may not exceed 12 months. In exceptional circumstances, where the recipient of the scholarship can demonstrate reasons outside their control, additional periods of leave may be granted. Only under exceptional circumstances will leave be possible beyond 2 years in total.
- The end date of the scholarship will be adjusted to account for the period of unpaid leave approved by the University.
- Applications for a leave of absence should be submitted via the Service Portal in line with the [HDR Candidature Management and Enrolment Variation Procedure](#).

## 15. APPEALS

The appeal mechanism for resolution of disputes which may arise during candidature are described in the [Research Training Ordinance](#).

## 16. RESEARCH OVERSEAS OR AT ANOTHER INSTITUTION

Candidates may request to undertake research overseas when this is considered necessary by the Supervisor and Head of School. Where the candidate's request is for a period of overseas research greater than three (3) months continuous time, an application must be submitted to the Graduate Research Office, in accordance with the [HDR Candidature Management and Enrolment Variation Procedure](#).

The scholarship holder will generally not be allowed to undertake overseas research in the first six months of scholarship tenure. 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 research.

If approved, scholarship payments will continue to be paid into an Australian bank account (with an Australian authorised deposit-taking institution), in the candidate's name, while the candidate undertakes their research overseas.

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

## 17. OTHER COURSES

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

## 18. RECOVERY OF MONIES OWED

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.

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.

## 19. SPECIFIC OBLIGATIONS OF SCHOLARSHIP HOLDERS

The scholarship holder shall diligently and to the best of their ability apply themselves to the successful completion of the degree.

The scholarship 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.

The scholarship holder is required to conform to the regulations and statutes (including disciplinary provisions) of the University and to the rules and procedures of Higher Degrees by Research.

The scholarship 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 scholarship may be terminated or the holder placed on a Candidature Support Plan.

The scholarship holder is responsible for seeking independent taxation advice in relation to their scholarship.

Acknowledgement of Australian Government support:

- Scholarship 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 scholarship 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 scholarship holder's Higher Degree by Research project.
- The acknowledgement must be in a prominent place and in an appropriate form. The acknowledgement must include the mention of the scholarship holder's support through an "Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship".