

HDR Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship Policy

Section 1 - Overview

(1) The UNE RTP Scholarship policy outlines the rules and requirements of the Commonwealth Government's Research Training Program scholarships. The content of this policy is mandated in the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#), see 1.6.45.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This policy applies to domestic and international HDR candidates who are in receipt of an RTP scholarship.

(3) This policy is for the governance of RTP scholarships and is for the use of applicants, enrolled HDR candidates, research supervisors and research administrators.

Section 3 - Policy

(4) To be eligible for any RTP Scholarship at UNE, students must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- a. be an Australian citizen or Permanent Resident, or a New Zealand citizen enrolled in an accredited HDR course of study at UNE; or
- b. be an overseas student enrolled in an accredited HDR course who meets the student visa requirements as specified by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection; and
- c. to be eligible for an RTP stipend a student must not be receiving income from another source to support that student's general living costs while undertaking their course of study if that income is greater than 75% of that student's RTP Stipend rate. Income unrelated to the student's course of study or income received for the student's course of study but not for the purposes of supporting general living costs is not to be taken into account; and
- d. not previously to have held a Commonwealth-funded postgraduate research scholarship unless it was terminated within six months of commencing; and
- e. not have completed a research degree at the same level as the proposed candidature; and
- f. if in receipt of an RTP Fee Offset scholarship, not to be receiving a scholarship for which course tuition is a component under any other scholarship program to which the Australian Government makes a substantial contribution.

(5) To be eligible for an RTP Fee Offset scholarship, a student must:

- a. be a domestic student enrolled in an accredited HDR course of study at UNE; and
- b. not be receiving an equivalent award or scholarship from the Commonwealth Government of Australia designed to offset HDR fees; or
- c. be an International student enrolled in an HDR course at UNE and already approved for a UNE RTP Stipend.

(6) The following Research Training Program support is available:

- a. RTP Fee Offsets pay for the tuition fees of an HDR student that would otherwise have been paid by the student. The Offset is granted to all eligible students who receive a UNE offer of admission, and does not need to be applied for separately to candidature. UNE fully offsets any tuition fees and students who receive an RTP Fee Offset scholarship are not required to pay any tuition fees. UNE must advise students of the estimated annual value of the fee offset as part of their RTP scholarship offer to identify clearly the level of support received from the Australian Government. Current UNE RTP Fee Offset rates will be published on the UNE Research Training Program webpage;
- b. RTP Stipends are provided to support the general living costs of HDR students through an annual stipend. Students must apply for an RTP Stipend when they are advertised by the University. The annual UNE stipend rates are published on the [RTP Scholarship](#) webpage. UNE offers the same stipend rate to all approved students, as advised in writing in the letter of offer issued by UNE;
- c. RTP Allowances provide for the following:
 - i. single rate overseas student healthcare for eligible International students; and
 - ii. \$400.00 thesis allowance that may be used for editing and printing costs.
- d. The Commonwealth Government imposes a 10% limit on the amount of RTP funding that can be used to support International HDR students. This replaces the IPRS funding program.

(7) RTP Stipend rates. At UNE RTP Stipend rates will be in accordance with the annual Base Rate set by the Commonwealth Government.

(8) The UNE RTP Stipend will be paid in fortnightly instalments into an Australian bank account.

(9) Periods of support: RTP Stipend

- a. a maximum of 3 years for a PhD;
- b. a maximum of 2 years for a Research Masters;
- c. for part-time study (50%) the periods are doubled. Students should be aware that part-time stipends may be subject to taxation and should seek professional advice prior to going part-time.

(10) Periods of support: RTP Fee Offset

- a. a PhD will normally be for three years, with possibility of extension of candidature to four years;
- b. a maximum of 2 years for a Research Masters;
- c. for part-time study the periods are doubled.

(11) Application process

- a. Scholarship information, including the dates of RTP Scholarship rounds and application forms can be found on the [HDR Scholarships](#) webpage.

(12) Selection for RTP Stipend will be awarded to domestic and international applicants as a result of a competitive selection process. Selection is based on academic merit and research performance as demonstrated by:

- a. academic qualifications and awards;
- b. research experience - any postgraduate research experience over the last five years, and any other research experience;
- c. employment history (where relevant);
- d. publications;

- e. non-traditional research outputs;
- f. statement of support from supervisor;
- g. academic referee reports;
- h. English language requirements.

(13) Information about Research Supervision at UNE and facilities provided can be found in the following:

- a. [Minimum Facilities Guideline](#)
- b. [HDR Registration of Research Supervisors Procedures](#)
- c. [HDR Research Activity and Publication for Higher Degree Research Supervisors Guidelines](#)
- d. Research Supervision Agreement (available as a downloadable document, via the [HDR Forms and Policies](#) webpage)
- e. [Working with your Supervisor](#)
 - i. [The Supervisor-Student Relationship](#)
 - ii. [Making the most of meetings](#)
 - iii. [Roles and Responsibilities](#)
 - iv. [Evaluating Supervisor-Student Interaction](#)

(14) Students in receipt of RTP Scholarships (stipend and fee offset) are permitted to suspend their candidature with the appropriate approvals. More information is available in the [HDR Research Candidature Rule](#).

(15) Information on paid leave for RTP Stipends.

- a. Students are entitled to receive up to 20 working days paid recreation leave and ten days sick leave for each year of the RTP Stipend. These leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the RTP Stipend but will be forfeited at the end of the candidature.
- b. Students are entitled to receive additional paid sick leave of up to a total of 60 working days during the duration of the RTP Stipend for periods of illness where the student has insufficient sick leave entitlements available under 15 (a), provided that a medical certificate has been provided by the student to Research Services.
- c. Sick leave entitlements (including additional sick leave) may also be used to cover leave for students with family caring responsibilities, subject to the usual practice of UNE.
- d. Students who have completed 12 months of their RTP Stipend are entitled to a maximum of 60 working days paid maternity leave during the duration of the RTP Stipend. Subject to the usual practice of UNE, paid parental leave may also be approved if the student has adopted a child.
- e. Students receiving an RTP Stipend who are partners of women giving birth, and who have completed 12 months of the RTP Stipend, may be entitled to a period of paid parental leave at the time of the birth or adoption, subject to the usual practice of UNE.

(16) In respect of paid work outside the HDR subject for which a student receives an RTP scholarship the University requires an HDR student to work full-time, that is 37 hours per week, on their research. Any paid work outside of the HDR subject must be approved by Principal Supervisor.

(17) Provisions for changes in the nature of a RTP scholarship student's enrolment, including but not limited to:

- a. Changes in the student's field of education. Students in receipt of RTP Scholarships are able to transfer Schools. Contact Research Services for more information;
- b. Transferring to another University. UNE accepts transfer of RTP Scholarships, depending on the availability of RTP scholarships at UNE (when transferring in) and will support candidates to transfer out. For more information contact Research Services;

- c. Students in receipt of RTP scholarships are able to transfer from full time to part time, providing they are a student living with a disability or have carer's responsibility. However changing to part time status may impact the tax free nature of the scholarship. Students considering this change should contact Research Services for more information;
- d. Students on RTP scholarships may apply to convert from a Research Masters to a Research Doctorate degree. More information can be found in the [Master Upgrade Checklist](#);
- e. Students on RTP scholarships may apply to convert from a Research Doctorate to a Research Masters degree. Contact Research Services for more information about this option.

(18) The procedures for termination of a RTP Scholarship are as follows:

- a. if the student ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in (3) above;
- b. on completion of the course of study;
- c. if UNE determines that the student has not complied with a requirement specified in its RTP Scholarship policy, or UNE HDR candidature rules.

(19) Information about grievance procedures for HDR students is on the [HDR Complaints and Grievances](#) webpage.

(20) HDR candidates are encouraged to undertake industry placements, research internships, professional practice activities or other similar enrichment activities during their HDR candidature. To be included in HDR candidature, where funded by an RTP scholarship, these activities must relate to the HDR subject, and be incorporated into the research plan.

(21) The Commonwealth Government requires that its contribution to HDR candidature be acknowledged at any time, during or after completion of the higher degree by research, by the recipient of an RTP Scholarship, or any other party who publishes or produces material such as books, articles, newsletters or other literary or artistic works that relate to the research project carried out by the recipient of an RTP Scholarship. This acknowledgement must be placed in a prominent place and in an appropriate form, in any publication. The acknowledgement must include the mention of the student's support through an 'Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship'.

Authority and Compliance

(22) The Vice-Chancellor, pursuant to Section 29 of the University of New England Act, makes this University Policy.

(23) University Representatives and Students must observe it in relation to University matters.

(24) The Rule Administrator is authorised to make procedures and guidelines for the operation of this University Policy. The procedures and guidelines must be compatible with the provisions of this Policy.

(25) This Rule operates as and from the Effective Date.

(26) Previous rules, policies, procedures and guidelines on HDR Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarships and related documents are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date of this new Policy.

(27) Notwithstanding the other provisions of this University Policy, the Vice-Chancellor may approve an exception to this Rule where the Vice-Chancellor determines the application of the Policy would otherwise lead to an unfair, unreasonable or absurd outcome. Approvals by the Vice-Chancellor under this clause must be documented in writing and must state the reason for the exception.

Status and Details

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