

Higher Degree by Research - Research Training Program Scholarship Policy and Procedure

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University (CDU) is committed to providing an environment that enables and supports transformative education through higher degrees by research (HDR) and drives world-class research in areas critical to the sustainable and prosperous development of Northern Australia and the wider region.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This procedure outlines the processes for applying for, selecting and administering Research Training Program (RTP) stipend for both university staff and HDR students.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This procedure applies to all HDR courses, candidates enrolled in HDR courses, and University staff responsible for supporting HDR candidates and courses.

(4) In particular, this procedure applies to all HDR candidates eligible for an RTP stipend and staff responsible for administering RTP stipends.

Section 4 - Policy

(5) RTP stipends are scholarships, granted to selected HDR candidates, that support the living expenses of these individuals. The [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#) and the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#) stipulates the minimum and maximum RTP stipend.

(6) This stipend is not taxable if the candidate is enrolled full time but taxable if the candidate is enrolled part time.

Eligibility

(7) HDR candidates can receive an RTP stipend only if they are enrolled in an HDR course and are eligible to enrol in a PhD at CDU, and were chosen to receive this award during a competitive selection process.

(8) HDR candidates cannot receive an RTP stipend if:

- a. they are receiving another scholarship to support their living expenses that is worth more than 75% of this RTP stipend;
- b. they have previously received an RTP stipend over a period of more than 3.5 years full time equivalent (FTE);
- c. the duration in which they have been enrolled exceeds the maximum candidature, being four years FTE as a PhD candidate and two years FTE as a Masters by Research candidate, excluding parental leave, jury leave or sick leave in accordance with the HDR policy.

(9) To receive the RTP stipend before confirmation of candidature, candidates must be enrolled full time. After their candidature is confirmed, the Dean of Graduate Studies can, in exceptional circumstances, approve requests from candidates to enrol part time and receive half the stipend.

(10) Before approving candidates to enrol part time, the Dean of Graduate Studies must consider whether:

- a. the utility or feasibility of this research is likely to diminish over time; and
- b. the family or health of the candidate may be harmed by the candidate being unable to study part time.

Application

(11) While individuals are applying to enrol in an HDR course, they are granted the option to indicate whether they would like to receive an RTP stipend.

(12) Enrolled candidates who have not been granted an RTP stipend should contact Research and Innovation who can guide these candidates through the approval process.

Duration of Stipends

(13) The RTP stipend will be terminated as soon as candidates no longer fulfill the eligibility criteria. Therefore, the duration of RTP stipends will depend on several considerations, such as whether candidates have been enrolled in a HDR course previously.

(14) If candidates have not been enrolled in a HDR course previously, they will be offered a stipend that lasts 3 years FTE if enrolled in a PhD and 2 years FTE if enrolled in a Masters by Research. Candidates will also be informed that the stipend may be extended up to 6 months, but only if enrolled in a PhD and if unforeseen and unavoidable events had impeded their progress.

(15) Further extensions are not permitted unless extraordinary events preclude candidates from progressing their research, and the Research Committee approves this extension.

Competitive Selection Process

(16) To choose which candidates should receive an RTP stipend, relevant staff at the University must arrange a competitive selection process that complies with the following principles:

- a. opportunities to apply for RTP stipends must be advertised as widely as reasonably possible within budgetary constraints;
- b. these opportunities should be broadcast prominently on the University website;
- c. applicants must be ranked fairly; and
- d. as fewer RTP stipends are available to international applicants, domestic and international applicants must be ranked separately.

(17) Depending on circumstances, the staff who arrange this process may include members of Research and Innovation and supervisors who are chief investigators on grants in which an RTP stipend was pledged in the budget.

(18) To rank applicants fairly, the relevant staff must employ a defensible, systematic method, such as a formula or weighting system. This method should favour applicants who are likely to complete the course on time and who are likely to fulfill other strategic priorities of the University.

(19) The method should also favour:

- a. applicants from communities that have experienced long term and/or systemic disadvantage;

- b. research that conforms to an existing or emerging strength of the University; and
- c. applicants who have not completed a degree at the same level of higher level before.

(20) A panel of at least three university staff with suitable expertise and unbiased by apparent, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest will be assembled to choose which applicants should be awarded the RTP stipend.

(21) Applicants awarded the RTP stipend should generally be ranked higher than applicants who are not awarded the RTP stipend. All exceptions must be justified in writing and kept as part of the record on these applications.

Communication to Successful Applicants

(22) After an application to receive an RTP stipend is approved, candidates will receive correspondence that outlines:

- a. the amount that candidates will receive each fortnight and the duration of this stipend;
- b. procedures around how and when they need to accept or decline the offer;
- c. leave entitlements of candidates;
- d. supervision, resources, and support to which candidates are entitled;
- e. the responsibilities that candidates must fulfill to maintain the stipend; and
- f. the right of candidates to be employed for up to 15 hours a week for full-time candidates and up to 30 hours a week for part-time candidates, with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

(23) After an application to receive an RTP stipend is rejected, candidates receive correspondence that:

- a. informs the candidate of this decision as sensitively as possible; and
- b. imparts opportunities that applicants can explore to secure this stipend or other stipends in the future.

(24) Regardless of whether the application to receive an RTP stipend is approved, the correspondence should refer to how candidates can submit complaints, grievances, and appeals, in accordance with the HDR policy.

Payment of Stipends

(25) The University must pay RTP stipends fortnightly to an Australian bank account with the name of the candidate.

(26) The University will suspend these stipend payments in accordance with the HDR policy if:

- a. candidates are granted a leave of absence, either because of personal reasons or because they are completing an internship; or
- b. candidates defer their course in accordance with HDR policy.

(27) Candidates may access sick leave, limited to:

- a. 10 days a year if no medical certificate is supplied; and
- b. an additional 60 days over the duration of this RTP if a medical certificate is supplied

(28) If there is a change in circumstances that may affect the eligibility of the recipient to receive payments, they must notify Research and Innovation as soon as possible.

Responsibilities of Stipend Recipients

(29) Recipients of RTP stipends must insert a statement in a prominent location to the effect of “This research was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship” in all publications including the thesis.

(30) Other individuals who publish material derived from this research project must also acknowledge the Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Other Stipends

(31) These policies and procedures should be extended to other stipends the University might supply from time to time, unless the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation approves otherwise. If the rules and conditions of stipends that other funding bodies supply contradict these policies and procedures, Research and Innovation should instruct candidates to follow the rules and conditions that are most stringent and contact the Dean of Graduate Studies to resolve any ambiguities that may arise.

RTP Allowances

(32) Research and Innovation will distribute RTP funding to the Faculties and Menzies School of Health, in accordance with existing agreements and guidelines. The Home Faculty (the Faculty or Institute with which candidates affiliate) can use this funding to discharge the ancillary expenses that enrolled HDR candidates incur to complete the course. These ancillary expenses include the costs of:

- a. equipment, consumables, stationery, and software that is not available in the University;
- b. courses, conferences, and travel—including occasions in which external students travel to the University;
- c. Overseas Student Health Cover; and
- d. other expenses, such as editorial services, research participants, and publication costs.

(33) The Home Faculty should decide how to distribute this funding most effectively but consider the following principles:

- a. the Home Faculty should convene, at least once a year, to unify the principles they apply to distribute this RTP allowance;
- b. the Home Faculty should dedicate a guaranteed minimum amount to each candidate, in accordance with the HDR – Minimum Resources Policy and Procedures; and
- c. the Home Faculty should use a defensible and systematic method to decide when to fund requests that exceed this minimum.

RTP Fee Offsets for International Candidates

(34) If international HDR candidates incur a tuition fee, they may be eligible to receive an RTP fee offset to partly or fully offset this fee provided that:

- a. they have not received an equivalent provision from the Commonwealth that is designed to offset tuition fees; and
- b. they have been chosen to receive this fee offset through a competitive selection process.

(35) To identify suitable candidates, the competitive selection process for the RTP fee offset should mirror the competitive selection process used to choose recipients of RTP stipends and can be conducted in parallel with the RTP stipend selection process.

Fees and Fee Waivers for Domestic Candidates

(36) The University will waive the fees of domestic HDR candidates until the period over which they have been enrolled exceeds the maximum duration of candidature. After this time, candidates who are granted extensions may be liable to pay fees. The fees can be waived if:

- a. there are compelling or compassionate reasons that circumstances have impeded progress; or
- b. the candidates are members of a community that has experienced long term and/or systemic disadvantage.

Transition Arrangements

(37) These policies and procedures apply to all candidates who were awarded scholarships after the date this document was released. The rules and conditions of previous scholarships at the time of their signed acceptance continue to apply to existing scholarship holders. Existing scholarship holders:

- a. must be able to maintain their existing rights after these policies and procedures are released
- b. must be informed of all changes to policies and procedures that could affect the scholarship they receive.

(38) Upon request, the University will supply HDR candidates with information about their RTP stipend if needed to enrol at another university.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(39) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the [Code of Conduct – Staff](#) or the [Code of Conduct – Students](#), as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the [Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2022](#) and the [Code of Conduct – Students](#).

(40) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the [Code of Conduct – Staff](#) and [Code of Conduct - Students](#).

(41) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the [Fraud and Corruption Control Policy](#) and [Whistleblower Reporting \(Improper Conduct\) Procedure](#).

Status and Details

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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Home Faculty" - The Faculty in which a Higher Degree by Research candidate is enrolled

"Faculty" - An organisational and academic unit in the University that delivers courses and conducts research.