

Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Stipend Scholarship

CONDITIONS OF AWARD 2023

1. Introduction

The Commonwealth Government's Research Training Program (RTP) (in effect as of 1 January 2017) provides funding to universities to support the research training of both domestic and international higher degree research (HDR) candidates. The funding provided through the RTP offers the provision for universities to administer and award a number of stipend scholarships known as Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarships. These awards are governed by the [Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#) and replace the support provided through the Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA) (see Section 21 of these conditions for arrangements for continuing candidates previously supported by an Australian Postgraduate Award).

Griffith University awards RTP Stipends to applicants of exceptional research potential commencing or enrolled in HDR programs for which RTP support is available. RTP Stipends are provided to assist with candidates' general living costs and do not cover program tuition fees.

2. Eligibility Requirements

- (1) To be eligible for a RTP Stipend Scholarship, an applicant must –
 - a. be commencing or enrolled in a HDR program (for which RTP support is available) at Griffith University; and
 - b. not be receiving income from another source to support the candidate's general living costs that provides a benefit greater than 75% of the RTP Stipend rate to undertake the proposed program. Income unrelated to the candidate's HDR program, or income received for the candidate's HDR program but not for the purposes of supporting general living costs, is not to be taken into account.

3. Selection Process

- (1) Awardees are ranked and selected on the basis of academic merit, research potential and the quality of the research training environment in which their research project will be undertaken, taking into account the University's strategic priorities. The selection process and criteria are as set out in Sections 5 and 6 of the *Higher Degree Research Scholarship Policy*.

Stipend and Allowances

4. Stipend

- (1) A full-time RTP Stipend Scholarship carries an annual stipend of \$32,192 (2023 rate). The stipend rate for any particular year may be the same as that for the preceding year,

indexed in accordance with the method set out in Parts 5-6 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

- (2) The University may, at its discretion and in accordance with its strategic priorities, offer RTP Stipends at a higher rate than that set out in Section 4(1). The award of RTP Stipends at a higher rate will be in accordance with the University's strategic priorities and as a result of a competitive selection process as per Sections 5 and 6 of the *Higher Degree Research Scholarship Policy*.
- (3) Income derived by way of a Scholarship by a candidate receiving full-time education at a University may be tax exempt. It is the responsibility of the scholarship holder to assess the tax liability of their scholarship.
- (4) The RTP Stipend will be paid fortnightly into an account in a bank, building society or credit union. Payment will be made from the date of commencement of study, except where an awardee is already enrolled in the program, in which case payment may commence from the date of advice of the grant of the award.

5. Relocation Allowance

- (1) An awardee who moves between Australian cities or travels from overseas specifically to take up the award is entitled to receive a maximum of \$515 for each eligible adult and \$255 for each eligible child to an absolute maximum of \$1,485 for the following on provision of receipts to the GGRS, verifying the costs of this travel:
 - a. travel expenses equivalent to the economy/student airfare for the candidate, spouse and dependents to travel to Brisbane or the Gold Coast via the most direct route. Where a candidate elects to travel by car, a per kilometre allowance up to the equivalent airfare for the candidate will be calculated. Candidates cannot claim for accommodation or meal costs if they elect to travel by car; and
 - b. removal expenses.
- (2) Any relocation allowance must be claimed within 6 months of commencement of the award. Relocation allowances are not payable for travel undertaken after the completion of studies or termination of the award.

6. Leave Entitlements

Awardees are entitled to -

- (1) 20 working days paid recreation leave and 10 working days paid sick leave each year within the tenure of the award. These leave entitlements may be accrued over the tenure of the RTP Stipend Scholarship but will be forfeited when the award is terminated.
- (2) additional paid sick leave of up to 12 weeks within the tenure of the award where the candidate has insufficient sick leave entitlements available under Section 6(1) of these conditions, upon the provision of a medical certificate. Claims for extensions of award may be made on the basis of periods of certified illness in excess of 10 consecutive working days. Claims must be made within 30 days of the end of the period of illness claimed. Sick leave entitlements may also be used to cover leave for candidates with family caring responsibilities.
- (3) up to 12 weeks paid parental leave within the tenure of the award, where the candidate is the primary carer of a new-born child or of a newly adopted child under 16 years of age, upon the provision of appropriate certification. Parental leave will not be approved

within the first 12 months of award commencement. Candidates requiring paid parental leave within the first 12 months of award commencement are encouraged to contact the GGRS Scholarships team for advice. This paid parental leave extends the length of the RTP Stipend Scholarship.

- (4) up to 10 working days paid partner leave within the tenure of the award, where the candidate is the partner of a primary carer of a newly born or adopted child, upon the provision of appropriate certification. Partner leave will not be approved within the first 12 months of award commencement. This paid partner leave extends the length of the RTP Stipend Scholarship.
- (5) International candidates seeking leave will need to meet the conditions of their visa to be entitled to the leave provisions described above and are advised to check with Griffith International.

Conditions of Award

7. Commencement of Study

- (1) Awardees must accept both a place in the HDR program as well as the RTP Stipend Scholarship by the date specified in the offer letter. The RTP Stipend Scholarship must be taken up between the dates specified in the letter of offer. Where exceptional circumstances prevent an awardee from taking up the award by the date specified in the offer letter, he/she may apply for a delayed commencement. Full details of the reasons for the request will be required. If an awardee cannot commence by the approved date the University may withdraw the award.

8. On Campus Enrolment Requirement

- (1) The requirements for awardees to maintain on-campus enrolment and the circumstances that may present an exception to this requirement are set out in Section 9 of the *Higher Degree Research Scholarship Policy*.

9. Study Load

- (1) The requirement for awardees to maintain a full-time study load and the circumstances that may present an exception to this requirement are set out in Section 10 of the *Higher Degree Research Scholarship Policy*.

10. Tenure

- (1) The tenure of a full-time RTP Stipend Scholarship is, from date of program commencement, up to two years (full-time equivalent) for a Masters (Research) candidate and up to three years (full-time equivalent) for a Doctoral candidate.
- (2) Continuation of receipt of the RTP Stipend during the tenure of the award is dependent upon evidence of the awardee's satisfactory progress in the HDR program, through the timely completion of candidature milestones and satisfactory annual progress reports.
- (3) The tenure of a RTP Stipend Scholarship will be reduced by any period of study undertaken:
 - a. towards the research project and/or degree prior to the commencement of the RTP Stipend Scholarship; or
 - b. towards the degree during suspension of the RTP Stipend Scholarship.
- (4) A Doctoral candidate making satisfactory progress may apply for an extension to the RTP

Stipend Scholarship tenure for up to a maximum of six months. An extension will only be approved where the grounds for the extension:

- a. relate to the study and are beyond the control of the candidate, and could not have been reasonably anticipated at the commencement of the program; or
- b. are on the basis of the candidate undertaking an industry placement, research internship or professional practice activity of more than 30 days duration, approved by the Dean Research as part of the HDR program, as per Section 15 of these Conditions of Award.

A request for an extension must be made at least one month before (but no more than two months before) the expiry date of the award. Awardees enrolled in a Masters (Research) program are not entitled to an extension of award.

11. Transfer of Award between Institutions

- (1) Awardees may request the transfer of their RTP Stipend Scholarship between Higher Education Providers. Awardees who transfer to another institution may continue to receive their RTP Stipend only if their new institution agrees to its continuation and subject to the new institution having sufficient RTP funding available. Transfers to Griffith University are managed in accordance with the scholarship selection process set out in Sections 5, 6 and 11 of the *Higher Degree Research Scholarship Policy*.

12. Changes to HDR Program

- (1) Applications to transfer candidature from one HDR program to another will be in accordance with Sections 8.10.3 and 8.10.4 of the University's *Higher Degree Research Policy*. If an awardee is permitted to transfer from a Masters (Research) to a Doctoral program or from a Doctoral to a Masters (Research) program, the maximum duration of the award will be adjusted accordingly.
- (2) The maximum tenure of a transferred award becomes that for the new HDR program minus the period of study undertaken towards the previous program prior to the conversion.
- (3) A request for a major change to the thesis topic must be supported by the principal supervisor and approved by the Dean (Research). If it is established through this approval process that the recorded field of research (FoR) and/or field of education (FoE) for the thesis topic have changed, the Griffith Graduate Research School will update these fields in the candidate's record.

13. Suspension of Stipend (Leave of Absence)

- (1) Approval may be given for up to 12 month's suspension of a RTP Stipend Scholarship during the tenure of the award, at the discretion of the Dean (Research) of the host Academic Group, to be taken in conjunction with a leave of absence from the HDR program. In exceptional circumstances, a further period of suspension to cover a period of special leave of absence may be granted, at the discretion of the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School. Leave of absence requirements are in accordance with Sections 8.13.1 to 8.13.4 of the *Higher Degree Research Policy*.
- (2) Periods of approved suspension will be added to the normal time for which the award may be held. Before an award is restored after a period of leave of absence, the awardee may be required to satisfy the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School that he/she is able to resume study.
- (3) An application to suspend an RTP Stipend Scholarship within the first six months may be considered only if there are exceptional circumstances beyond the recipient's control. Such applications require the approval of the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School.

14. Employment and other funding

- (1) Awardees are permitted to:
 - a. obtain funds for fieldwork, equipment or other expenses not covered by the award;
 - b. obtain funding for overseas travel costs from other Australian Government awards or other funding sources; and
 - c. undertake a strictly limited amount of paid employment which is unrelated to their research topic. Employment is restricted to no more than nine hours per week during normal working hours (between the hours of 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday). Work performed outside of these hours should be at the approval of the principal supervisor.
- (2) Awardees should consult with their principal supervisor in regard to the decision to undertake paid employment while in the HDR program. Decisions on the undertaking of any paid employment will be on the proviso that the activity does not impede progress in the HDR program.
- (3) Holders of an RTP Stipend Scholarship with dependent children may be eligible for the Family Payment paid by Centrelink. Enquires must be directed to Centrelink.

15. Industry placements, research internships and professional practice activities

- (1) Recipients of an RTP Stipend may undertake industry placements, research internships and professional practice activities, that are approved by the Dean Research as part of their eligible HDR program.
- (2) Ongoing receipt of an RTP Stipend at the rate set out in Section 4 (1) of these Conditions of Award may be available for the duration of an approved industry placement, research internship or professional practice activity if:
 - a. The RTP Stipend awardee has not exceeded the maximum duration of their HDR program;
 - b. The awardee has sufficient RTP Stipend tenure remaining; and
 - c. The industry placement, research internship or professional practice activity will run for at least 30 days and no more than six months duration.
- (3) The undertaking of an approved industry placement, research internship or professional practice activity does not constitute grounds for extension to the RTP Stipend tenure beyond the provision for extension set out in Section 10 of these Conditions of Award.

16. Ethics

- (1) Where necessary, awardees will abide by the National Health and Medical Research Council codes on animal and human experimentation, *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, and the University's safety practices.

17. Acknowledgement Requirement

- (1) The Commonwealth Government's support via the provision of the Australian Government RTP Stipend Scholarship must be acknowledged when, at any time during or after completion of the HDR program, the awardee, his/her supervisor or any other party, publishes or produces scholarly material and/or artistic works which relate to the research project carried out by the awardee. This acknowledgement must take the form of a statement included in the published material mentioning the support received through an 'Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship'.

18. Repayment of Scholarship

- (1) An awardee is required to repay any scholarship payment if:
 - a. The payment is made in error or overpaid (as determined by the University);
 - b. The awardee is no longer enrolled in the period the scholarship is paid;
 - c. The awardee does not meet the conditions of the scholarship or is ineligible for the scholarship including situations where;
 - i. The awardee has provided false information; or
 - ii. The awardee has been made a scholarship offer in error.

19. Termination of Award

- (1) An RTP Stipend Scholarship will be terminated in any of the following circumstances:
 - a. at the end of the period of tenure provided for by the award or when the awardee lodges a thesis for examination, whichever is earlier;
 - b. if the University is satisfied that the program of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of award, and no suitable arrangements can be made for continuation of the degree;
 - c. when the candidate ceases full-time enrolment without indication of a date at which full-time enrolment will be resumed, or when approval has not been obtained to hold the RTP Stipend Scholarship on a part-time basis;
 - d. if the awardee commences a period of suspension without formal approval, or fails to maintain an on campus enrolment without the approval of the Dean, Griffith Graduate Research School for remote candidature status;
 - e. if the awardee does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of suspension, or does not make arrangements to extend that period of suspension;
 - f. if the candidate ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in Section 2 of these Conditions of Award, other than during a period in which a suspension of candidature has been approved;
 - g. if the University determines that a candidate is guilty of serious academic or student misconduct in accordance with the *Academic Misconduct Policy – Higher Degree Research Candidates* and the *Student Misconduct Policy*;
 - h. if the candidate fails to maintain satisfactory progress, as determined by the University.
- (2) If an award is terminated, it cannot be reactivated unless the termination occurred in error.

Specific University Obligations

20. Reconsideration of Decision

- (1) A decision by the University made in respect of an application for scholarship is final and not reviewable, as per the University's *Student Review and Appeals Policy*.
- (2) A candidate who is dissatisfied with a decision to terminate the scholarship may request a review of the decision in accordance with the *Student Review and Appeals Policy*.

Candidates requesting a review of the decision should specify the grounds in writing using the *Review of Decision* form, and follow the process for requesting a review set out in the *Student Review and Appeals Procedures*.

21. Arrangements for continuing candidates previously awarded an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)

- (1) Current APA awardees who commenced in their program prior to 1 January 2017 will be offered an RTP Stipend Scholarship providing equivalent support to the APA for the period remaining on the candidate's award tenure.

22. Change to Award Conditions

- (1) The conditions of award may change and these changes will be made available on the relevant scholarship website.

Relevant External Documents

[Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#)

The Department of Education and Training's [Research Training Program \(RTP\) webpage](#)

The Department of Education and Training's [Research Training Program – Frequently Asked Questions for students](#)