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Purpose

This policy describes requirements and principles for the selection of candidates for, and the administration of, FedUni higher degree by research scholarships.

Scope

This policy provides a framework for the administration and allocation of higher degree research (HDR) scholarships for which the University has primary responsibility. The scholarship schemes within the scope of this policy include but are not limited to:

- University funded scholarships
- Research Training Program (RTP) funded stipends
- FedUni Funded Postgraduate Research Scholarships (FPRS)
- Research Priority Area Scholarships (RPA Scholarships)
- International FedUni Funded Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IFPRS)
- International Fee Scholarships or Special Overseas Scholarships (SOSS)
- Externally funded scholarships
- School funded scholarships
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander targeted HDR scholarships

This policy does not apply to...
Research Training Program Fee-offset Scholarships. These items are set out in the RTP Scholarship Policy. Scholarships that are not paid through FedUni.

Additional information regarding RTP scholarships, including stipends can be found in the Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarships Policy RS2009. In relation to RTP scholarships, where policy differs between RTP Policy RS2009 and HDR Scholarship Policy RS20XX, the Research Training Program (RTP) Policy RS2009 takes precedence.

Legislative Context

- Federation University Australia Act 2010
- The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act) – establishes TEQSA as an agency which regulates using the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)
- Regulation 5.1 – Higher Doctorates, Doctoral Degree (Research), Doctoral Degree (Professional) and Masters Degree (Research)

Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>Student enrolled in a higher degree by research program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of Candidature (CoC)</td>
<td>Milestone by which a candidate confirms that their research project is viable and is approved by the CoC panel to continue their project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cotutelle award</td>
<td>Award made in partnership with another institution, wherein the candidate is jointly enrolled in both institutions and receives a testamur from both institutions on completion of the program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferment</td>
<td>A period of up to 12 months, normally covering the academic year, before a student, who has been offered a place in a higher education course, enrolls in that course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designated Cohort</td>
<td>An approved group of potential applicants, identified as having common characteristics (such as completion of a particular qualification) for the purposes of gaining special entry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDGS</td>
<td>Dean of Graduate Studies – academic staff member responsible for overseeing HDR programs, HDR candidates and supervisors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFTSL</td>
<td>Estimated full time study load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Any staff member employed by FedUni to undertake academic activity, including permanent, fixed term contract, casual, honorary and adjunct appointments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>The process by which a person, having received a written offer of a place, shall register their program and course of study with FedUni by submitting a form of enrolment signed by both the applicant and the program coordinator or person of equivalent authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOS Act</td>
<td>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000, as amended from time to time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Candidate</td>
<td>Where a candidate conducts their research from an approved external location, such as a laboratory, and an agreement exists between the location and FedUni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Academic units of FedUni</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPRS</td>
<td>FedUni Postgraduate Research Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Program</td>
<td>One of the following courses of study: Masters Degree (Research), Doctoral Degree (Research), or Doctoral Degree (Professional).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Degree by Research candidate</td>
<td>A FedUni student enrolled in a Masters Degree (Research), Doctoral Degree (Research), or Doctoral Degree (Professional).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS</td>
<td>International English Language Testing System.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave from studies</td>
<td>Period of either six or 12 months, covering a normal teaching period(s), where an enrolled student is excused from formal study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer</td>
<td>Offer of Admission to Candidature – The written offer provided to an applicant for admission to a HDR program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-campus candidate</td>
<td>Where a candidate studies from a location other than on campus or an approved external facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Supervisor</td>
<td>A staff member of FedUni who meets the requirements of and has been approved for inclusion to the Register of Supervisors as a principal supervisor and has primary oversight of an HDR candidate’s research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Supervisor</td>
<td>A staff member of FedUni who meets the requirements of and has been approved for inclusion to the Register of Supervisors as a supervisor and provides support to an HDR candidate and to the Principal Supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Supervisor</td>
<td>An individual who is external to FedUni who meets the requirements of and has been approved for inclusion to the Register of Supervisors as a supervisor and provides support to the candidate and to the Principal Supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probationary candidate</td>
<td>A FedUni student enrolled in a Masters Degree (Research), Doctoral Degree (Research), or Doctoral Degree (Professional) who has not yet completed the confirmation of candidature process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provisional Principal Supervisor</td>
<td>A staff member who does not meet the requirements to be listed as a principal supervisor on the Register of Supervisors but has the support of their School to act as a principal supervisor under the guidance of a mentor who is registered as a Principal Supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHDC</td>
<td>Research Higher Degrees Committee – A standing committee of Academic Board that deals with Higher Degree by Research matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPA</td>
<td>Research Priority Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTS</td>
<td>The Research Training Scheme, which formerly provided fee-exemption places for candidates enrolled in higher degree by research programs – now superseded by Research Training Program (RTP).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTP (Research Training Program)</td>
<td>Federal Government funding scheme that enables the provision of higher degree by research fee offset and stipend scholarships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOSS</td>
<td>Special Overseas Student Scholarship – fee scholarship to cover the cost of tuition fees for international students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stipend</td>
<td>A fortnightly scholarship paid to a candidate to cover living expenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate / Supervisor agreement</td>
<td>Formal written agreement outlining meeting methods, communication, training requirements and other project related requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEQSA</td>
<td>Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency.</td>
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Policy Statement

1. Eligibility

Stipend Eligibility

To be considered eligible for the award of a stipend, applicants must:

• meet the FedUni’s HDR program entry requirements,
• have applied for candidature or be currently enrolled in, an HDR program at FedUni Australia,
• submit their scholarship application and candidature application (where required) before the scholarship closing date,
• take up the stipend on a full-time basis, unless exceptional circumstances apply with the approval of the Dean, Graduate Studies,
• maintain satisfactory progress in their program.

Candidates may request part-time enrolment at the time of application for a stipend scholarship where they can demonstrate exceptional circumstances. Where part-time enrolment is granted, the stipend will be paid at a rate of 50% of the full-time stipend amount.

Specific criteria for eligibility, including part-time enrolment, for the various scholarships offered by FedUni are presented in the HDR Scholarships Procedure.

Additional requirements for eligibility may be applied to externally funded, school, RPA and specific project related stipends. Additional requirements may include but are not limited to:

• Industry experience,
• Specific training qualifications,
• Holding a specific undergraduate or postgraduate degree,
• Participating in an interview prior to offer of candidature.

Additional requirements for a stipend must be set prior to scholarship advertising and available on the FedUni website and scholarship application form.

International Fee Scholarship eligibility

To be considered eligible for the award of a fee scholarship, applicants must

• be an international applicant or current international student,
• meet the FedUni’s HDR program entry requirements including English language requirements, as set out in HDR Candidate Selection Policy RS1930
• maintain satisfactory progress in their program.

2. General Terms and Conditions

General terms and conditions of scholarships are set out below:

1. Scholarship offer and length of scholarship

1.1. Advertised scholarships at FedUni may be withdrawn or awarded at the discretion of FedUni. Offers of externally funded scholarships are subject to approved funding contracts.
1.2. The length of the stipend and/or fee scholarship will be provided to candidates in their Letter of Offer to Admission of Candidature or their Letter of Scholarship Offer.

1.3. Any special conditions, milestones or external partner requirements will be set out in the Letter of Offer of Admission to Candidature or their Letter of Scholarship Offer

1.4. Scholarship payments will not commence until the candidate returns a signed Acceptance of Offer acknowledging the terms in 1.3.

2. **Commencement:**

2.1. The scholarship must commence within the dates specified in the Letter of Offer to Admission of Candidature or Letter of Scholarship Offer.

2.2. Commencement of scholarships cannot be deferred. Where a candidate defers their offer to take up a HDR place, an offer of scholarship will be withdrawn.

2.3. Scholarships will not commence unless a candidate is enrolled.

3. **Leave from studies and Leave of absence**

3.1. Where a candidate is granted approved leave from studies from their HDR program, their scholarship will be suspended until they return from leave. The duration of the scholarship will be extended by the duration of the leave from studies.

3.2. The scholarship will not be suspended for the period where a candidate takes a leave of absence. Request for paid leave must be supported by relevant documentation, e.g. medical certificates or verification of personal circumstances. Paid leave provisions are set out in section 3.

4. **Termination of scholarships**

Scholarships will be terminated where:

4.1. The candidate ceases to meet the eligibility criteria,

4.2. The maximum duration of the scholarship has been reached,

4.3. The candidate fails to return from an approved period of leave from study, Æ¼

4.4. Their thesis is submitted for examination

4.5. The candidate has committed serious misconduct, including the provision of false or misleading information,

4.6. Candidature has been terminated due to unsatisfactory progress, e.g Show Cause

4.7. The candidate fails to re-enrol, with no response to attempts at communication by FedUni,

4.8. The candidate takes unapproved leave, with no response to attempts at communication by FedUni,

4.9. The candidate fails to participate in a formal progress review and does not respond to reasonable requests to do so.

4.10. The candidate ceases to be a full-time candidate, and compassionate circumstances do not apply

4.11. The School and / or funding body deems that the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence,

4.12. The School deems that the candidate has failed to maintain satisfactory progress,
4.13. A doctoral candidate fails to confirm within their first twelve months of full-time candidature.

5. **Reinstatement**
Stipends that have been terminated and have not reached the end of their funding period may be reinstated in the following instances:

5.1. A candidate is required to re-enrol after examination to undertake revision of the thesis and re-submit for examination

5.2. After a show cause proceeding finds that the candidate’s enrolment should not be terminated and the Principal Supervisor, Dean of the School of enrolment and Dean of Graduate Studies approve the continuation of the scholarship.

5.3. Where unsatisfactory progress, unapproved leave or progress reporting issues have been resolved and reinstatement of the scholarship is approved by the Principal Supervisor, Dean of the School of enrolment and Dean of Graduate Studies.

6. **Taxation and legal requirements**

6.1. Stipends are provided for educational purposes only. Under section 51-10 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 stipends paid to full-time students for educational purposes are treated as exempt income. Advice on the taxation status on any type of income derived from a full-time or part-time HDR stipend scholarships must be sought from the ATO.

7. **Concurrent awards**

7.1. A candidate who receives a stipend is permitted to receive a concurrent award, scholarship or salary in relation to their course of study, provided the concurrent award, scholarship or salary is less than 75% of the annual value of the stipends.

8. **Permanent residency**

8.1. An international candidate who becomes an Australian permanent resident after commencing their scholarship, must notify FedUni immediately. The candidate will be transferred to a RTP Fee-Offset place, as described in the RTP Policy. Where a candidate pays full fees and has not advised FedUni of their permanent residency status prior to the semester census date, fees must still be paid by the candidate.

3. **Leave from studies and Leave of absence**

Leave of absence entitlements do not extend scholarship or candidature periods. Stipend holders have access to the following leave of absence entitlements:

- **Recreation Leave**: 20 working days of paid recreation leave per year. This may be accrued and carried forward, but entitlements are forfeited on the cessation of the stipend. Taking recreation leave does not extend the period of candidature or scholarship entitlements.

- **Sick Leave**: up to 20 working days of paid sick leave per year. This may be accrued and carried forward but entitlements are forfeited on the cessation of the stipend.

- **Parental Leave**: Maximum of 12 weeks paid parental leave after completing 12 months of candidature for the primary-care parent of a newborn infant. In instances of parental leave candidature will be paused.

- **Foster Care Leave**: 15 working days, leave may be approved for new foster parents leave if the candidate has completed 12 months EFTSL of study and is the primary care giver.

- **Partner Leave**: A candidate who is the partner of a woman giving birth may be entitled to 10 working days paid parenting leave if they are not the primary care giver. If they are the primary care-giver they may be entitled to an additional 50 weeks of unpaid carer’s leave.
A candidate may apply for Leave from Studies extending for at least one teaching period (six months) and up to one year.

Applications for leave from studies by candidates who have not yet undertaken Confirmation of Candidature or whose progress is unsatisfactory will only be considered after a candidature management plan has been developed by the candidate and Principal Supervisor, and endorsed by the School Associate Dean Research and approved by the Dean, Graduate Studies.

Taking leave of studies stops stipend payments for a designated period and extends the period of stipend entitlement. Leave from studies requirements are described in the Candidature Management Procedure.

4. Conversion
Masters to PhD

Applications for transfer between masters and PhD programs must be endorsed by the Dean of the School and approved by RHDC.

Where a candidate receives a FedUni funded scholarship and transfers from a masters degree to a doctoral degree, the total duration of the scholarship will be up to three years from the date that the candidate commenced the masters degree, with a possible extension of six months.

Where a candidate receives an externally funded scholarship, any extension to the duration of the scholarship is at the discretion of the funding body.

PhD to Masters

Scholarship payments for a candidate who transfers from a PhD to a masters program will be terminated on approval of the conversion request, unless compassionate or compelling circumstances apply. Applications must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies for FedUni-funded scholarships or School Dean for School-funded scholarships. Where a scholarship is funded by an external partner, the external partner must approve.

5. FedUni Funded Scholarships
Selection

In the selection of applicants for allocation of stipends, FedUni aims to achieve inclusive and equitable outcomes taking into account strategic considerations, the availability of suitable resources and project supervision and the academic merit of applicants. In doing so, FedUni will ensure that it operates in accord with the University’s Fair and Transparent Decision Making Guidelines.

Stipends are normally awarded to candidates to be enrolled in a doctoral degree. In some circumstances applicants seeking entry to a master's candidature may be awarded a stipend.

Selection processes for FedUni funded stipends are described in the HDR Selection and Awarding of Scholarships procedure. FedUni funded stipends are subject to the approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research & Innovation.

Extensions

PhD candidates who have received a FedUni-funded scholarship may apply for one six month extension to scholarship under exception circumstances. Extension requests are not automatic and must be well justified. They are subject to approval. Extensions to FPRS, RPA and FedUni-funded stipends must be approved by the Dean of
Graduate Studies. Extensions to School funded stipends must be approved by the Dean of the School of enrolment.

6. Externally Funded Scholarships
Externally funded stipends and fee scholarships

Scholarships from funding sources external to the University, such as government or contracted external partners, will be awarded on merit. Externally funded scholarships may be advertised or may be awarded on the basis of nomination/invitation by FedUni or the external partner. Applicants would normally be expected to take up the scholarship on a full-time basis, unless agreed to by the University and the external partner. Probationary candidates / candidates taking up externally funded scholarships may also be required to sign a student agreement with the external partner.

Research contracts

Where a contract is required to secure external funds to establish an externally-funded scholarship, processes outlined in the Research Funding Policy must be followed.

Student agreements

External funding partners may require candidates to sign an individual student agreement before scholarship payments can commence. Student agreements may include details on intellectual property, authorship, milestones to be met or other conditions of scholarship. Candidates should seek independent legal advice before signing an individual student agreement.

Selection

Additional requirements for eligibility will be advertised on the FedUni website and stated on the scholarship application form.

A scholarship selection panel will be established by the school of enrolment and may include industry or external partners. When forming selection panels, diversity and equity requirements will be considered in the appointment of panel members.

Selection processes for externally funded scholarships are described in the Awarding of HDR Scholarships Procedure.

Extensions

Where a candidate needs to continue their project beyond the minimum completion date, approval of additional expenditure for an externally-funded scholarship may have to be sought from the funding body, as outlined in the Research Funding Policy. This is not guaranteed until advised in writing.

The Dean of the School of enrolment must approve the allocation and / or extension of a stipend or fee scholarship from the external funding source.

7. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships
The University is committed to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander post-graduate research opportunities. With respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants for HDR scholarships the University addresses this objective by:

- Flexibility and affirmative action in the assessment of the background and competitiveness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants for scholarships,
- Offering an Indigenous Higher Degree by Research scholarship for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher to undertake full-time Higher Degree by Research studies,
- Extending the normal period of scholarship payment for the degree in which an ATSI HDR candidate is enrolled.

The awarding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholarships processes are detailed in the Awarding and Conditions of Higher Degree by Research Scholarships Procedure.

8. Confidentiality and Privacy

All personal information collected by FedUni is governed by the Information Privacy Policy. The following are examples of instances where FedUni will use and disclose an HDR student's personal information for legitimate purposes:

- providing information to Centrelink;
- releasing statistical information to relevant government bodies such as the Department of Education, and the Office of Training and Tertiary Education;
- releasing relevant information to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), the Department of Education, and the Australian Taxation Office

Supporting Documents

- HDR Candidate Selection Policy RS1930
- Research Training Program (RTP) Policy 2009
- Selection and Awarding of a HDR Place Procedure.
- HDR Candidature Management Policy RS1935
- HDR Candidature Management Procedure RS1937
- HDR Supervision Policy RS1928
- Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Candidates Procedure RS1929
- Department of Immigration and Boarder Protection
- HDR Scholarships website

Responsibility

- Responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this policy and its accompanying procedure/s – Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation
- Responsible for maintaining the content of this policy as delegated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation, Dean Graduate Studies
- Responsible for the administration support for the maintenance of this policy as directed by the Dean Graduate Studies, Research Integrity & Policy Coordinator

Promulgation

The HDR Scholarship Policy will be communicated throughout the University community in the form of:
1. An Announcement Notice via FedNews website and on the ‘Recently Approved Documents’ page on the ‘Policies, Procedures and Forms @ the University’ website to alert the University-wide community to the approved Policy,

2. Distribution of e-mails to Head of School / Head of Department / University staff, and/or

3. Notification to Schools.

Implementation

The HDR Scholarship Policy will be implemented throughout the University via:

1. An Announcement Notice via FedNews website and on the ‘Recently Approved Documents’ page on the ‘Policies, Procedures and Forms @ the University’ website to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy,

2. Training sessions.