

RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM (RTP) SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

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Policy name	Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship Policy (Issue Two)
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Contact person	Chair, HDR Subcommittee
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Related policies and regulations	Higher Degree by Research Support Policy (TLR 5.10) Higher Degree by Research Student Supervision Policy (TLR 8.04) University Regulations, Award Regulations Division 11, sections 80-81, 82, 84 University Regulations, Academic Regulations , Division 9

1. OVERVIEW

Bond University is committed to providing a high-level Higher Degree by Research ([HDR](#)) experience to ensure success in students' research and research training. The provision of appropriate financial support is an important part of the research training environment at Bond University.

The University recognises the diversity of our HDR student population and is committed to providing a high quality and productive education environment, with the greatest opportunity for timely, quality outcomes and experiences for each HDR candidate.

Specifically, the University may provide students with an Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship, in the form of one or more of the following financial benefits:

- a) Fee Offset (fee waiver)
- b) Living Stipends
- c) RTP Allowances to assist students with ancillary costs of a HDR including, but not limited to:
 - i. for [overseas students](#), a standard Overseas Student Health Cover policy approved by the Commonwealth Department of Health which covers the student and their spouse and dependents (if any);
 - ii. relocation costs to undertake a HDR; and
 - iii. assistance with academic publication costs.

The University will apply its discretion regarding the allocation of funding to the three areas outlined above and will allocate funding to students as set out in this Policy.

This Policy fulfils the requirements of the [Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#) regarding the allocation of RTP funds. This Policy should be considered in accordance with other relevant, applicable laws and requirements, in particular, those pertaining to immigration and visa conditions.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Bond University will provide flexible funding arrangements to support the training of both continuing and new [domestic students](#) and overseas students undertaking Higher Degree Research, in one or all of the following ways:

2.1. RTP Fee Offset (fee waiver)

- Where the University uses its discretion to provide a RTP Fee Offset (fee waiver), a fee waiver up to 100% of the gross fee will be applied for domestic students enrolled in an HDR degree at Bond University for the maximum degree length from the date of enrolment.

- Overseas students awarded a Living Stipend as a result of a competitive, merit-based selection process will be awarded a RTP Fee Offset for the maximum degree length from the date of enrolment.
- If the maximum degree length from the date of enrolment is exceeded, the [Awardee](#) is liable for fees in accordance with the [Postgraduate Program Fee Schedule](#).
Bond University will advise Awardees of the estimated annual value of the Fee Offset as part of their RTP Scholarship offer to clearly identify the level of support received from the Australian Government.
- As with all financial support, a leave of absence, reduction or increase in Full-time Equivalent (FTE), conversion of degree, transfer to another university, suspension, and completion of the HDR program will affect an Awardee's residual entitlements for the RTP Fee Offset.
- To ensure ongoing entitlement to the RTP Fee Offset, Awardees must complete the annual HDR Progress Report in a timely manner and be deemed to be making satisfactory progress.
- A change in an Awardee's Field of Education will not impact on the provision of their RTP Fee Offset (fee waiver).

2.1.1. Transferring Students

- Upon provision of supporting documentation from the transferring university (including any Effective Full-time Student Load (EFTSL) consumed while at that institution), students transferring from another Australian university to Bond University will be offered a reciprocal RTP Fee Offset to the maximum degree length, net of EFTSL previously consumed from the date of enrolment in the same degree.
- Incoming transfer students are eligible to apply for a RTP Living Stipend.
- Bond University students who are transferring to another Australian university will be provided with a copy of their current RTP Fee Offset award, and EFTSL consumed while at Bond.

2.2. RTP Living Stipends

- Each year, Bond University will determine the number of RTP Living Stipends to be awarded to domestic and overseas students.
- The RTP Living Stipend is awarded through a competitive, merit-based scholarship application and ranking process as determined and managed by the Bond University HDR Scholarships Panel, and published on the University's Research Scholarships website: <https://bond.edu.au/researchers/higher-degrees/scholarships-support/research-scholarships>.
- There is a cap of 10% on the amount of RTP funding that can be used to support overseas students.
- As with all financial support, a leave of absence, reduction or increase in Full-time Equivalent (FTE), conversion of degree, transfer to another university, suspension, and completion of the HDR program will affect an Awardee's residual entitlements for the RTP Living Stipend.
- A change in an Awardee's Field of Education will not impact on the provision of their RTP Living Stipend.

2.2.1. Rate of Award and Payment

Bond University will publish the base RTP Living Stipend rate for each year on the website. This rate is indexed annually.

The [part-time student](#) RTP Living Stipend rate will be 50% of the student's full-time RTP Living Stipend rate.

Stipends will be paid fortnightly directly to the Awardee's nominated Australian bank account. This must be an account in the Awardee's name, with an Australian Authorised Deposit-Taking Institution ([ADI](#)).

2.2.2. Overseas Student Health Cover

Overseas students awarded a RTP Living Stipend will be awarded a standard Overseas Student Health Cover policy approved by the Commonwealth Department of Health which covers the student and their spouse and dependents (if any).

2.2.3. Priority Student Focus

The University places a focus on commencing [Research Doctoral students](#) for all Living Stipend scholarships, although currently enrolled students are permitted to apply.

At its discretion, Bond University may identify a special focus for the competitive round. This may include students undertaking research in a particular discipline or area of research strength, low socioeconomic status, Indigenous students or other specific groups.

A special focus will be explicitly listed on the Bond University [Research Scholarships](#) webpage, with relevant weighting for individuals meeting the special focus criteria.

2.2.4. Other Income

To be eligible for a RTP Living Stipend, a student undertaking their program of study, must not receive another source of income for general living expenses which is greater than 75% of the RTP Living Stipend rate.

A student must not be receiving an equivalent award or scholarship from the Commonwealth designed to offset HDR fees.

2.2.5. Period of the Award

The RTP Living Stipend is for Doctoral students for up to three (3) years full-time from the enrolment date. The period of support will be increased for Leave of Absence or extended sick leave as may be approved by Bond University.

2.2.6. Interruption of the Award

As with all financial support, a leave of absence, reduction or increase in FTE (e.g. full-time to part-time or part-time to full-time), conversion of degree (e.g. upgrade from a Research Masters to a Research Doctoral degree), transfer to another university, suspension, and completion of the HDR program will affect an Awardee's residual entitlement for the RTP Living Stipend.

Awardees who downgrade from a Research Doctoral program to a Research Masters program will forfeit their scholarship.

3. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for a RTP Living Stipend, RTP Fee Offset (fee waiver) or RTP Allowance, a student must have a current Letter of Offer for a place in an HDR program at Bond University.

4. APPLICATION, SELECTION, AND OFFER PROCESS

The selection process for RTP Living Stipends and RTP Fee Offsets for both domestic and overseas applicants is a competitive, merit-based process determined and managed through the University's HDR Scholarships Panel.

All applicants must apply for a RTP Scholarship through the application portal on the Research website:

<https://bond.edu.au/researchers/higher-degrees/scholarships-support/research-scholarships>.

4.1. Acceptance of Award

All successful applicants offered a RTP Scholarship (Living Stipend or Fee Offset) will be sent a formal Scholarship offer document with the specific Scholarship details (such as scholarship type, annual award amount, duration of scholarship, end date, maximum number of working hours) in an accompanying Scholarship Schedule and Acceptance Form.

Successful applicants must do the following by the due date contained therein, otherwise the offer for Scholarship will lapse:

- sign and return the Scholarship Schedule and Acceptance Form;
- provide details of the Australian bank account that is in the name of the successful applicant; and
- complete enrolment requirements (if not yet enrolled) by the date prescribed in the offer documentation.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF A RTP SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

All students receiving RTP Scholarship Support must acknowledge the Commonwealth's support when they publish or produce material such as books, articles, newsletters or other literary or artistic works which relate to the research project, whether this is during or after completion of their HDR studies. This requirement applies to the Awardee, their supervisor or any other party who publishes or produces material carried out by the recipient of RTP Scholarship.

The acknowledgement must be displayed in a prominent place using the following text:

'This research was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship'

6. LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

6.1. Recreation Leave

Recreational Leave can only be taken with the approval of the student's supervisor.

Students are entitled to receive up to twenty (20) working days' paid Recreation Leave, pro rata.

Up to four (4) weeks Recreation Leave may be accrued over the life of the RTP Living Stipend. Accrued Recreational

Leave will be forfeited at the completion of the award, or when the RTP Living Stipend is terminated.

Recreation Leave will not normally be approved within the first six (6) months of the RTP award.

Students are required to report the number of days Recreation Leave taken each semester on the Annual Progress Report.

The Scholarship Award will not be extended by the period of approved Recreational Leave.

6.2. Sick Leave

Sick Leave can only be taken with the approval of the student's supervisor.

Students are entitled to ten (10) working days paid Sick Leave for each year of the RTP Living Stipend, pro rata.

Sick Leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the RTP Living Stipend, however, accrued Sick Leave will be forfeited at the completion of the award, or when the RTP Living Stipend is terminated.

Students are required to report the number of day's Sick Leave taken each semester on the Annual Progress Report.

Sick Leave entitlements may also be used to provide care to dependants with a short-term medical condition supported by a medical certificate.

The Scholarship Award will not be extended by the period of approved Sick Leave.

6.3. Additional Paid Sick Leave

Additional paid Sick Leave can only be taken with the approval of the student's supervisor, the Associate Dean (Research) in their Faculty of enrolment and the Head HDR Programs.

Where a student's base Sick Leave entitlements are exhausted, students are entitled to receive additional paid Sick Leave of up to a total of sixty (60) working days during the duration of the RTP Living Stipend for periods of illness on provision of a medical certificate. The Scholarship Award will be extended by the period of approved additional sick leave.

Additional paid Sick Leave entitlements may also be used to provide care to dependants with a medical condition supported by a medical certificate.

6.4. Parental Leave

[Parental Leave](#) can only be taken with the approval of the student's supervisor, the Associate Dean (Research) for their Faculty and the Head HDR Programs.

6.4.1. Entitlements

Female Award holders who have completed twelve (12) months of their RTP Award are entitled to a maximum of sixty (60) working days, pro rata, paid Parental Leave during the duration of the RTP Award.

Award holders who are the partner of a woman giving birth, who have completed twelve (12) months of their RTP Living Stipend, are entitled to ten (10) working days, pro rata, of paid Parental Leave at the time of the birth or adoption.

The Scholarship Award will be extended by the period of approved Parental Leave.

6.4.2. Applying for Parental Leave

To make an application for Parental Leave, a student must provide their supervisor, Associate Dean (Research) and the Head HDR Programs with:

- Ten (10) weeks' notice in writing that they intend to take Parental Leave. This notice must also specify the types of Parental Leave the student is seeking and the date the awardee anticipates starting leave;
- If the Awardee is pregnant, a medical certificate stating that the student is pregnant and the expected date of birth of the child;
- If the Awardee or Awardee's partner is applying for adoption related leave, a statement from the adopting agency or other appropriate body regarding the expected date of placement of the child;
- If the Awardee's partner is pregnant, a medical certificate stating that the partner is pregnant and the expected date of birth of the child.

6.4.3. Start date of Parental Leave

Female Award holders who are pregnant, may start Parental Leave six (6) weeks before the expected due date, and no later than the expected due date of the child or placement of an adopted child.

If a pregnant Award holder continues to work during the six (6) weeks prior to her expected due date, the University may request that the Awardee provide a certificate from her medical practitioner stating that she is fit to continue working.

7. TERMINATION OF A RTP SCHOLARSHIP

Bond University will terminate a student's RTP Scholarship:

- if the Awardee ceases to meet the specified eligibility criteria, other than during a period in which a suspension has been approved; or
- on completion of the course of study; or
- two (2) weeks after the thesis is submitted for examination, or at the end of the award, whichever is earlier; or
- if the University determines that the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence in accordance with the offer of the award; or
- on the death or incapacity of the Awardee; or
- following withdrawal from the research program for any reason; or
- if the Awardee does not resume study following a period of intermission or make arrangements to extend that suspension; or
- if the Awardee has failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress as evidenced by progress reports; or
- if the Awardee has committed a serious breach of research integrity or committed serious misconduct, including but not limited to the provision of false or misleading information; or
- if the Awardee has their HDR program candidature terminated under the [University's Award Regulations, Part 1, Section 85](#); or
- for any other reason determined by the HDR Subcommittee.

8. EXTENSION OF RTP LIVING STIPEND

RTP Living Stipend holders, who have maintained satisfactory progress through their candidature, may be granted an extension for a duration of up to six (6) months where the extension relates to extenuating circumstances beyond the Awardees' control that have prevented completion of the research within the original timeframe.

Personal issues, illness, publications, work commitments and carer responsibilities are not considered reasons for extension. Similarly, work commitments cannot be accepted as grounds for an extension.

Awardees must submit a request for extension to the Head HDR Programs at least one (1) month prior to the end of their current Award, with supporting evidence. This must include a completion plan that details the work to be undertaken by the student and supervisor to achieve a timely completion within the extension period.

9. TRANSFER BETWEEN RESEARCH DEGREES

If an Awardee converts/upgrades from a Research Masters to a Research Doctoral degree, the maximum duration of the Award will be adjusted accordingly. For an Awardee who converts from a Research Masters to a Research Doctoral program, the enrolment date of the Research Masters is considered to be the commencement date.

If an Awardee converts/downgrades from a Research Doctoral degree to a Research Masters their RTP Fee Offset will be reduced to a period of 24 months from the date of the original enrolment in the Doctoral program.

RTP Living Stipend holders who convert/downgrade from a Doctoral degree to a Research Masters will forfeit their RTP Living Stipend.

10. GRIEVANCE AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

Refer to [University Regulations, Part 2, Division 9](#).

11. PROVISIONS FOR SUSPENSIONS

Refer to [University Regulations, Part 1, Division 11, section 84](#)

12. HDR SCHOLARSHIP PANEL COMPOSITION

The HDR Scholarship Panel shall be constituted as follows:

- Chair of Graduate Research (Chair) (1)
- One academic staff member per Faculty (4)
- Director of Research (1)

The Bond University HDR Scholarships Panel will meet biannually to award Living Stipends through a competitive, merit-based selection process.

The HDR Scholarships Panel may convene additional meetings as required in order to provide a timely review process to applicants.

The HDR Scholarships Panel determines and manages the competitive, merit-based scholarship application process for awarding RTP Scholarships. The Process is published on the University's Research Scholarships website: <https://bond.edu.au/researchers/higher-degrees/scholarships-support/research-scholarships>.

13. PROGRESS AND MILESTONES

Awardees are subject to progression and milestone requirements as per the [University Regulations, Part 1, Division 11, sections 80-81](#).

Mid-year and end of year Progress Reports are required to be completed in a timely manner by the Awardee and their supervisor.

The University will monitor and report on HDR student progress to the Higher Degree by Research Subcommittee ([HDRS](#)). Where HDR students are identified as being 'at risk' the following action will be taken:

- The HDRS will be forwarded a list of all at risk students by the Faculty, as compiled by the HDR Unit;
- All at risk students identified must, with their Supervisor, meet with their Faculty Associate Dean (Research) to discuss their candidature; options for appropriate supports to be put in place moving forward; and, to agree, document and action a clear plan for improved progress;
- This meeting and outcomes must be documented by the Faculty and placed on the student's file, with a copy to the student;
- The Faculty must also notify the Chair of Graduate Research.

14. EMPLOYMENT

- An Awardee who is also an overseas student must not undertake employment that is inconsistent with visa requirements.
- Employment must not interfere with study and students must maintain satisfactory progress.
- If employed by the University, the appointment must not exceed half time or 50% of a full-time position.
- Scholarship recipients must engage in higher degree research work in a full-time capacity (35 hours a week), for at least 48 weeks a year.
- No more than eight (8) hours' employment a week during the hours of 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.
- Approval must be sought for periods of employment amounting to more than eight (8) hours per week between normal working hours (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).
- Outside of normal working hours there is no limit on the amount of time that a student can work.

15. OPTIONAL ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES AS PART OF HDR STUDIES

The University's Career Development Centre in partnership with Faculties and other units, supports arrangements for optional industry placements, research internships, professional practice activities or other similar enrichment activities. Where such enrichment activities are for six (6) weeks or less duration, the activity will be included within the original duration of the RTP Award. Students will continue to receive their RTP Stipend rate applicable at that time.

Enrichment opportunities will:

- a) balance the interests of HDR candidates appropriately with their industry partners and enhance the HDR training program overall;
- b) balance the need to enhance transferable skills while not impinging on the likelihood of the candidate completing the research requirements in a timely fashion;
- c) be cognisant of any visa requirements for international HDR students.

16. SUPERVISION AND FACILITIES

The facilities and supervision that will be provided to each student awarded a RTP Scholarship is detailed in the following University Policies:

- Higher Degree Research Student Supervision Policy ([TLR 8.04](#))
- Higher Degree by Research Support Policy ([TLR 5.10](#))

17. DEFINITIONS

ADR	An Associate Dean (Research) at Bond University.
AQF	The Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013.
Australian ADI	Authorised Deposit-Taking Institutions (ADIs) is an Australian government term for a corporation which is authorised under the Banking Act 1959 to take deposits from customers. ADIs include banks, building societies and credit unions.
Awardee	A person who has received, or accepted, a formal offer of a Research Training Program (RTP) Fee Offset (fee waiver) or Living Stipend by Bond University.

Continuing student	<p>Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a student whose period of support under the Research Training Scheme (RTS), International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) or Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) would terminate on or after 1 January 2017; or ▪ a student who has received an offer of support from Bond University under the Research Training Scheme (RTS), International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) or Australian Postgraduate Award (APA), and accepted this offer of support, and whose offer of support was scheduled to commence on or after 1 January 2017.
Domestic student	A student who is an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or a permanent resident of Australia.
Higher Degree by Research (HDR)	A higher degree by <i>research</i> which is a <i>Research Doctorate</i> or <i>Research Masters</i> program for which at least two-thirds of the student load for the program is required as <i>research</i> work.
HDRS	The Bond University Higher Degree by Research Subcommittee.
Overseas student	A person (whether within or outside Australia) who holds a student visa, but does not include students of a kind prescribed in the ESOS Regulations.
Parental Leave	Leave that is associated with the birth of a child, being a child born to the Awardee or their partner, or for the adoption of an infant child.
Part-time student	A student enrolled at less than 0.75 of a full-time student load.
Research Doctoral Student	A Level 10 Doctoral Degree (Research) qualification as described in the AQF.
Research Masters	A Level 9 Masters Degree (Research) qualification as described in the AQF

18. RELATED PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES, AND FORMS

[Schedule 1 COVID-19 Special Circumstances Provisions](#)
[Application Process for COVID-19 Special Circumstances Provisions](#)

Schedule 1 - COVID-19 Special Circumstances Provisions

This schedule relates to the provision of support for the Research Training Program (RTP) and the Bond University Postgraduate Research Scholarship (BUPRS) holders impacted by COVID-19.

The COVID-19 Special Circumstances Provisions will end on 31 December 2022.

The COVID-19 Special Circumstances Provisions are in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) Amendment (No.1) 2020

To the extent that there is any inconsistency between this schedule and the Research Training Program Scholarship Policy, this schedule will prevail. Any issues of uncertainty will be referred to the DVC (Academic) for decision.

COVID-19 Special Circumstances Provisions

a) COVID-19 extension of fee-waiver offset

The University may grant a fee-waiver extension of up to six months where a student can demonstrate that they otherwise were making satisfactory progress and the course of their study is, or has been, materially adversely impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. The maximum period of six months applies to students undertaking either full-time student load or part-time student load.

b) COVID-19 extension of RTP or BUPRS Stipend

The University may grant a RTP or BUPRS stipend extension of up to six months where a student can demonstrate that they otherwise were making satisfactory progress and the course of their study is, or has been, materially adversely impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. The maximum period of six months applies to students undertaking either full-time student load or part-time student load.

Eligibility

- a) Eligibility is limited to students who were either enrolled;
 - a) as at 1 March 2020; *or*
 - b) prior to 1 March 2020 and on a suspension or leave of absence as at 1 March 2020.
- b) The student must be making satisfactory progress as demonstrated from recent Progress Reports.

Application Process for COVID-19 Special Circumstances Provisions

The student must submit a written request for extension to the Chair of Graduate Research in the prescribed form with supporting evidence, including supervisor reports, to demonstrate the material adverse impact caused by COVID-19 restrictions including matters such as an inability:

- to access laboratory and research facilities; *or*
- to access research participants requiring face to face procedures; *or*
- to travel to collect field data; *or*
- to apply other alternative research methods or to use a period of leave of absence.

The application must include a completion plan that details the work to be undertaken by the student and supervisor to achieve a timely completion within the extension period.

The University will also consider the evidence set out in recent Progress Reports and whether the student has taken the opportunity to take LOA during the critical period of COVID-19 restrictions.

The University will inform the student in writing of the outcome which will specify the period of the extension.

All extensions must be approved by the University no later than 31 December 2022.