



THE BOND UNIVERSITY RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP PANEL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Bond University values its higher degree research student cohort and provides a substantial level of direct financial support to many students. As with any higher education provider, Bond University is not in a position to offer scholarships to all students. A scholarship will only be offered to students who possess excellent academic merit and research potential. A scholarship for all successful applicants includes a fee waiver, stipend (living allowance), and for international students it also includes overseas health cover.

There are two key overarching principles for determining the distribution of scholarships among applicants. First, scholarships are to be awarded through a competitive merit-based process. Second, scholarship applicants are to be treated equitably and fairly, regardless of their research discipline, and regardless of the source of their scholarship funding.

In terms of the process for ranking, scholarship panel members rank each individual applicant against the criteria included in Table 1. The collective scores are summed, and a preliminary list of ranked applicants constructed. Starting with the top ranked applicant, each applicant is individually assessed and any moderation to individual scores from a scholarship panel member is undertaken. Moderation typically occurs when on reflection and/or based on panel discussion, a scholarship member alters their individual score. This may or not alter the overall rankings.

The following is meant to be a guide to assist panel members in determining rankings for scholarship applicants. This is particularly the case with respect to the suggested weighting of scores (summarised in Table 1). There can clearly be a need to consider each application on a case by case basis rather than just applying an overall score. This is likely to be particularly important for applicants that are around the margin of being approved or rejected for a scholarship. Bond University has deliberately taken a more flexible and inclusive approach to scholarship assessment than many other higher education providers.

Table 1. Summary of weightings for attributes to assess scholarship applicants.

Attribute	Weighting
Project Proposal	10
Previous academic performance with a focus on research subjects or projects	25
Research experience and potential (work experience and positions held)	25
Academic Referee Reports	15
Supervisor Supporting Statement	5
Awards and Recognition	10
Research Impact	10

1. Research Proposal (Score out of 10)

While certain elements of a research proposal will be specific to a certain discipline, there are elements which should stand out across the disciplines. This includes a clearly defined scope of work, a literature review of sufficient depth to demonstrate that the applicant has a grasp of the literature base, organisation of the research proposal, clear and succinct research questions, and well-described, feasible and appropriate methodology. The applicant should also be able to demonstrate that they have a grasp of methodologies relevant to their discipline area. At least one panel member should be able to provide additional background in the discipline area to inform the panel of any specific details.

2. Previous Academic Performance (Score out of 25)

It can be argued that previous coursework achievement is not always the best indicator of research potential, but nonetheless it does potentially provide some insight into the applicant's attributes, including time management which is important for a timely HDR completion. The focus for scholarship assessment is on performance in research (preferably independent) subjects undertaken by the applicant. Any training in research methods or the philosophy of research will be considered favourably. The importance of previous coursework achievement may be diminished depending on the time elapsed since completion and work experience

As a bare minimum a recently graduated applicant should have undertaken "minor thesis work", and the grades achieved for this should be a Distinction or High Distinction (or equivalent). A student with First Class Honours in a dedicated research focussed Honours year should rank highly, although it should be recognised that the prevalence of such an Honours year differs substantially across disciplines and is also declining in some discipline areas.

3. Research Experience and Research Potential (Score out of 25)

This is a parameter that is highly influenced by career stage and professional opportunity (including career interruptions). The challenge that panel members weigh-up is research potential versus research output that has been realised. Students that have had the opportunity to publish should also rank highly, although the exact level of input by the student into the publishing process should be ascertained if possible, as well as the quality of the publication forum.

Some students may have publications by doing some very basic RA work but having done so in a laboratory where all staff involved in the project are included as co-authors regardless of actual contribution. The opportunity for RA work is also highly variable across disciplines and these should also be taken into consideration.

A prospective student may have substantial relevant work experience related to their proposed research topic. This can include research assistant work, clinical experience and other work in the public and private sector that is relevant to the project. Again, this is a parameter influenced by career stage and professional opportunity (including career interruptions). A recent graduate may

have less work experience opportunities. A potential applicant may have developed new research skills, or further developed existing skills over and above the level achieved in previous study. For a high professional achiever, a consideration is also how the prospective student will transition from the workplace to the HDR environment, particularly given the likely difference in responsibility and individual control that can occur.

4. Academic Referee Reports (Score out of 15)

Academic referee reports provide an important independent assessment of a candidate's academic potential and abilities. The focus is on academic referee reports and not referee reports of a personal nature. The latter should be avoided by an applicant and are not generally looked at favourably by Assessment Panel members. Ideally the applicant should provide referee reports from persons that are able to provide first-hand experience of their research potential or research output. Referee reports from potential supervisors are ineligible, as are those from family members.

Principal Supervisor's Supporting statement (Score out of 5)

The principal supervisor's statement will provide an important independent assessment of the applicant's ability to undertake the project outlined in the project proposal. The statement should assert that the applicant has a grasp of the literature base, and has a well-described, feasible project with appropriate methodology. The principal supervisor is also invited to comment on the applicant's research potential and abilities.

Awards and Recognition (Score out 10)

Awards and recognition are a good way to judge an applicant relative to their peers in their discipline. University awards (e.g. University Medals) and professional association awards should be more highly regarded in most instances than community awards. However, the latter still carry weight.

Research Impact, Stakeholder engagement, and/or alignment with strategic priorities (Score out of 10)

The applicant may address one or more of these topics, depending on their relevance to their own research

Research impact is increasingly being recognised by the Commonwealth Government as a highly desirable parameter to measure. Research impact is the demonstrable contribution that research makes to the economy, society, environment and culture beyond the contribution to academic research. Measures of research impact will vary across disciplines.

Research success often involves working and engaging with stakeholders. A candidate that has experience working with stakeholders relevant to their discipline is well positioned for their candidature and for their future careers.

Each Faculty has a number of strategic research priorities and the Scholarship Assessment Panel will weigh-up each application against the relevant strategic priorities. The Panel advises the applicant to discuss this with their supervisor before completing the question