



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 able 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
Research Project summary	10
Identify how your project will address the gap in research	20
Previous Research outputs (i.e. publications conference presentations)	10
Research experience and potential	25
Previous academic performance	25
Referee reports	10

1. Research Project Summary (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. Candidates should be able to succinctly summarise their research project in non-academic terms. *This includes a summary of the research proposal, research questions, and appropriate methodology.* 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. Research Impact, how will the project address the gap in knowledge (score out of 20)

The gap is considered the missing piece or pieces in the research literature. It is the area that has not yet been explored or is under-explored. It is important to keep in mind, however, that just because you identify a gap in the research, it doesn't necessarily mean that your research question is worthy of exploration.

The research should have valuable practical and/or theoretical implications. In other words, answering the research question could either improve existing practice and/or inform professional decision-making (Applied Degree), or it could revise, build upon, or create theoretical frameworks informing research design and practice (PhD Degree). References should be included to substantiate your response.

3. Previous Research Outputs (score out of 10)

A traditional research output includes a 'book', 'book chapter', 'journal article' and 'conference paper'. Non-traditional research outputs contribute to a broader understanding of intelligence and development than traditionally recognised. They provide an important insight into applied research in a range of disciplines, and creative and practitioner-based research. They are essentially any output other than an article, book, or conference publication.

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.

4. 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 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.

Your academic transcripts will be used to assess your academic performance.

5. 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. 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.

Your resume will be used to assess your research experience and potential.

6. Academic Referee Reports (Score out of 10)

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. It is acceptable to for your supervisors to provide referee reports but reports from family members are ineligible.