AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE AWARDS  
(WITH STIPEND)  
2012 CONDITIONS OF AWARD

1. Introduction

1.1 Australian Catholic University operates a postgraduate award scheme for students, known as the Australian Catholic University Postgraduate Awards (ACUPA) with stipend, to support persons of exceptional research promise to undertake a higher degree by research at any of the University’s campuses.

1.2 ACUPAs are awarded by the University Research Training Standing Committee (RTSC) to conduct research in any area of study in which postgraduate supervision is available.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Academic requirements
To be eligible for an ACUPA, an applicant must meet all of the following requirements:

(a) have completed at least four years of tertiary education study at a high level of achievement with a research component. For example, a:
   • four-year degree with honours;
   • three-year degree and an honours year;
   • three-year degree and one year of a Masters preliminary or other qualifying programme; or
   • three-year degree and a postgraduate program with a research component

(b) have obtained Upper Second Class Honours or equivalent results. In regards to equivalence the University may also consider previous study, relevant work experience, research publications, referee reports and other research experience.

(c) be undertaking or accepted into a higher degree by research at Australian Catholic University

(d) be enrolled as a full-time student upon commencement of their award or, in exceptional circumstances, be granted approval by the university for a part-time award in line with the criteria detailed in section 3.2.

(e) have their enrolment in the proposed higher degree programme accepted by the university before being ranked for an offer of an ACUPA.

Applicants are ineligible for an ACUPA if they:
   • have held an ACUPA, unless it was terminated within six months of the commencement of benefits; or
   • are currently receiving another equivalent award, scholarship or salary to undertake the research higher degree, providing benefit greater than 75% of the base ACUPA stipend rate.
2.2 Citizenship requirements
To be eligible for an ACUPA in 2012, an applicant must be an Australian Citizen, a New Zealand citizen or an Australian Permanent Resident at the closing date of applications. An ACUPA may also be awarded to a student who has been awarded the International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS).

2.3 Selection Process
The university is required to select eligible applications on the basis of academic merit and through a competitive selection process. Applications will be referred to the Research Training Standing Committee for assessment and applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application at the conclusion of the ranking process.

When considering Upper Second Class Honours equivalence (2.1(b) above), the University may:
(a) select applicants presenting other qualifications and/or highly relevant work experience as equating to Upper Second Class Honours, provided the ACUPA Guidelines are followed and justification for the rating is provided;
(b) assess other qualifications as equating to a Upper Second Class Honours degree, including advanced postgraduate diplomas and Masters by coursework degrees with at least a 25% research component.
(c) take into account research publications and research performance

2.4 Offer of an Award
When the university offers an award to a successful applicant, it will provide the conditions of award to the candidate along with the offer letter.

2.5 Eligibility for Part-Time Awards
The University may approve a part-time ACUPA for a student only if:
(a) the student has exceptional circumstances. The university must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances relate to significant caring commitments or a medical condition which limits the student’s capacity to undertake full-time study.

A student who has a part-time ACUPA may revert to full-time study at any time with the permission of the university.

2.5.1 Part-time awards are not available to applicants seeking to undertake paid employment on a full-time or on a substantial part-time basis.

NOTE: (Substantial part-time work is regarded as being more that the university would permit its full-time award holders to undertake without interfering with their study programmes.)
3. Tenure

3.1 Full Time Awards
3.1.1 A full-time ACUPA with Stipend may be held for three years for a research Doctoral degree (e.g. PhD or EdD) or for two years for research Master’s (MPhil, MEd, MExSc, MMid, MNurs).

3.1.2 Periods of study already undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the award will be deducted from the maximum period of tenure.

3.2 Part Time Awards
3.2.1 In approving a part-time award, the university must be satisfied that the award holder’s circumstances are such that it would not be reasonable to expect a student to study on a full-time basis and that there may be a caring commitment or medical condition which would impinge upon the ability of the candidate to meet the normal full-time requirement.

3.2.2 The tenure for part-time awards is six years for research doctoral degree programmes and four years for research Master's degree programmes.

3.2.3 Part-time awards are NOT available to applicants seeking to undertake paid employment on a full-time, or on a substantial part-time basis, and recipients are subject to the same restrictions on employment as full-time ACUPA holders.

3.2.4 A part-time award holder is expected to progress at half the rate of a full-time award holder and extensions are possible for Doctoral candidates. (No extensions are possible for part-time Master’s candidates.)

3.2.5 Award holders approved to study part-time may revert to full-time study at any time with the permission of the university.

3.2.6 Stipends for part-time awards are NOT tax exempt. The part-time rate is adjusted for taxation so that part-time award holders receive half the amount paid to full-time award holders.

3.3 Extension of an Award
3.3.1 A doctoral candidate may apply for a maximum extension of up to six months subject to satisfactory progress, provided the grounds for extension are related to study and are beyond the control of the candidate.

3.3.2 No extensions are possible for Master's candidates.

3.4 Changing between Masters and Doctoral Studies
The RTSC may approve, on the recommendation of the Associate Dean (Research), conversion of an ACUPA with stipend for Master’s degree study to an ACUPA with stipend leading to a research doctorate. Similarly, an award for doctoral studies can be converted to a Master’s research award providing that the maximum tenure of the degree has not been exceeded. Any period of candidature completed will be deducted from the maximum tenure of the degree.
3.5 Completion of a Master’s Degree
3.5.1 An ACUPA holder completing a research Master’s degree may continue the award for Doctoral research studies provided that there is no interval between Master’s and Doctoral candidature, or that such an interval is covered by suspension of the award.

3.5.2 Because an award normally expires on completion of a programme, the candidate should ensure that the progression to a research Doctorate or suspension of the award is arranged before the Master’s studies are completed.

NOTE: the maximum period of an ACUPA for a candidate progressing from Master’s to Doctoral research candidature is three years from the date the student took up the award as a Master’s candidate.

3.6 Suspension of an ACUPA
3.6.1 ACUPA holders may apply to the university for a suspension of their award for up to twelve months. The approval of suspensions is at the discretion of the university.

3.6.2 In exceptional cases, candidates may apply for suspensions beyond twelve months. Any suspensions beyond twelve months must be approved by the RTSC, subject to it being satisfied that the exceptional circumstances are beyond the student’s control and warrant a further suspension of the ACUPA.

3.6.3 Periods of study undertaken towards the degree during suspension of the ACUPA must be deducted from the maximum period of its tenure.

3.7 Eligibility for concurrent awards, scholarships or salaries
ACUPA holders may receive a concurrent award, scholarship or salary to undertake their research higher degree if:

- The concurrent award, scholarship or salary provides a benefit of less than 75% of the base ACUPA stipend rate; or
- The ACUPA is suspended for the period of concurrent award, scholarship or salary and the period of study undertaken towards the research higher degree during suspension of the ACUPA is deducted from the maximum period of its tenure.

Income earned from sources unrelated to the course of study is not subject to the 75% rule.
4. Stipends and Allowances

Where a full-time ACUPA student is not enrolled over the full period of the year, because of a late commencement or periods of suspension, the university must provide at least the proportion of the annual stipend for the period in which study is undertaken for that year.

4.1 Commencement of an ACUPA
An ACUPA student must normally commence by 31 March of each calendar year.

4.2 Annual Stipends and Outside Work
4.2.1 ACUPA stipend rates are indexed each year in accordance with the Higher Education Operating Grant Index.

4.2.2 ACUPA holders are permitted to:

- Obtain funds for fieldwork, equipment or other expenses not covered by the award;
- Obtain funding for overseas travel costs from other Australian Government awards or any other source; and
- Receive income derived from part-time work undertaken within the guidelines set by universities.

4.3 Living Allowance
An ACUPA at ACU carries a pro-rata living allowance at the base rate of approximately $25,000 per annum (tax exempt) for both full-time doctoral and research Master’s awardees. Payments shall be made on a fortnightly basis.

4.4 Thesis Allowance
4.5.1 An allowance, to be determined by the university, will be paid upon presentation of original receipts to the Graduate Research Office.

4.5.2 The thesis allowance must be claimed within one year of the submission of the thesis for an examination and no more than 2 years after termination of the award.

4.5.3 The amount paid will be up to the maximum rate applicable at the time of submission of the thesis.

4.5.4 The allowance is a contribution to the costs of production of the thesis (i.e. typing support, photocopying, and binding) and does not include costs such as purchase of computer equipment.

4.5.5 The thesis allowance is payable for costs associated with submission of a thesis, or the lodgement of bound copies of the thesis following approval, provided that the claim is made within one year of the resubmission date or lodgement date. The combined total of allowances
for submission and final submission must not exceed the approved maximum amount.

4.5.6 In exceptional circumstances, students may apply for a waiver of the relevant time limit on claiming the thesis allowance with any decision remaining at the discretion of the university. Any waiver of the time limit must be approved by the RTSC, subject to it being satisfied that the exceptional circumstances were beyond the candidate’s control and warrant an extension of the period in which a thesis allowance may be claimed.

4.5.7 The award of an ACUPA does not cover annual student services charges. Candidates are responsible for paying such charges themselves.

4.6 Allowance Claims.
Universities will make reimbursement payments to ACUPA students on provision of full particulars and receipts for all other payments. Students should receive full reimbursement for the eligible claims they make, up to the approved maximum amount. This includes reimbursement for any GST amounts specified in the receipts provided.

5. RTS
5.1 All students allocated an ACUPA and who are classified as domestic students shall receive an RTS place.

6. Leave Arrangements

The University may grant an ACUPA holder the following leave entitlements:

6.1 Recreation Leave

6.1.1 ACUPA holders will receive up to twenty (20) days paid recreation leave each year of the award calculated on a pro-rata basis within the period of the award.

6.1.2 Recreation leave may be accrued but must be taken during the tenure of the award. Payment in lieu of taking annual recreation leave is not permitted.

6.1.3 ACUPA holders will forfeit any unused leave remaining when an award is terminated or completed.

6.2 Sick Leave

6.2.1 ACUPA holders may receive up to ten (10) days sick leave each year of the award and this may be accrued over the tenure of the award.

6.2.2 ACUPA holders may also receive additional paid sick leave of up to a total of twelve (12) weeks during their award for medically substantiated periods of illness lasting longer than ten
days.

6.2.3 Sick leave entitlements may also be extended to cover ACUPA holders with family responsibilities caring for sick children or relatives, subject to the usual practice of the university in relation to students on similar awards.

6.3 Maternity Leave

6.3.1 Once ACUPA holders have completed twelve months of their award, they are entitled to a maximum of twelve (12) weeks paid maternity leave during the tenure of the award.

6.3.2 Periods of paid maternity leave are in addition to the normal duration of the ACUPA.

6.3.3 ACUPA holders who have not completed twelve months of their award may access unpaid maternity leave through the suspension provisions.

6.4 Parenting Leave

6.4.1 ACUPA holders, who are partners of women giving birth and who have completed twelve months of their award, may be entitled to a period of paid parenting leave at the time of the birth, subject to the usual practice of the university in relation to students on similar awards.

6.4.2 Periods of paid parenting leave are in addition to the normal duration of the ACUPA.

6.4.3 ACUPA holders who have not completed twelve months of their award may access unpaid parenting leave through the suspension provisions.

7. Academic Progress

ACUPA holders must submit regular progress reports as and when required by the institution. The university is required to terminate the awards of candidates who fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress.

8. Transfer of an Award

An ACUPA cannot be transferred to another institution


9.1 ACUPA holders may undertake part-time work subject to conditions determined by the university. The university must be satisfied that any approved part-time work does not interfere with the student’s study programme.
9.2 ACUPA holders 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 any other source; and
(c) receive income derived from part-time work undertaken within the guidelines set by the University. (See Section 9.4 below)

9.3 There is no limit on how much income an award holder can receive from part-time work. However, this income will not be tax exempt.

9.4 An ACUPA holder may undertake part-time work subject to conditions determined by the university. The university must be satisfied that any approved part-time work does not interfere with the student’s study programme.

9.5 ACUPA with stipend holders may undertake a strictly limited amount of part-time work subject to conditions determined by the university. Part-time work shall not exceed an average of EIGHT (8) hours in a working week, which is defined as the period between the hours of 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

9.6 Such part-time employment must not interfere with an award holder’s research programme or academic progress.

9.7 Holders of a part-time award are subject to the same restriction on employment as full-time award holders.

10. Postgraduate Student Obligations

10.1 All postgraduate students are obliged to be familiar with and abide by relevant State and Commonwealth Privacy Legislation, in particular the Information Privacy Principles of the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1998. These are available at: http://www.privacy.gov.au/materials/types/infosheets/view/6541

10.2 All postgraduate students are also obliged to be familiar with and abide by:
- the University Regulations governing their candidature;
- the University’s Code of Conduct of Research;
- the University’s Intellectual Property Policy;
- the National Health and Medical Research Council codes on human and animal experimentation;
- the Australian Government Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee guidelines for research;
- Commonwealth and State regulations and guidelines governing research involving ionizing radiation, and access to and handling of hazardous or restricted substances.
Newly enrolling candidates must apply for the relevant ethics/safety approval as soon as they have developed their research proposal (including: research design, methodology and research instrument).

Currently enrolled candidates accepting an Award must provide a copy of the approval from the Research Projects Ethics Committee and a copy of the annual renewal if the approval was granted more than 12 months previously.

10.3 Candidates should also be fully aware of their obligations regarding contact with their supervisors, and the need to submit written material and academic progress reports as and when required. They shall also be diligent in pursuing their research and in completing their candidature as soon as possible.

11. Termination of an Award

11.1 The university must terminate an ACUPA:

(a) if, in the opinion of the university, the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of the ACUPA, and no suitable alternative arrangements can be made for continuation of the postgraduate degree; or

(b) if, a university determines that a student is guilty of serious academic misconduct, including the provision of false or misleading information;

(c) when the candidate ceases to be a full-time candidate and when approval has not been obtained to hold the ACUPA on a part-time basis; or

(d) on completion of the course, or the death, incapacity, resignation or withdrawal of the candidate; or

(e) the award holder does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of suspension, or does not make arrangements to extend that period of suspension; or

(f) if the award holder fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress; and/or

(g) if the ACUPA holder accepts another equivalent award, scholarship or salary to undertake their research higher degree providing a greater than 75% of the base APA stipend rate and the APA holder does not comply with the requirements of Section3.7 above.
12. Appeal Procedures

12.1 Students may appeal to the University Research Training Standing Committee (RTSC) for the resolution of any disputes that may arise concerning the award.

12.2 Appeals will only be heard on claims of procedural deficiencies in the assessment process and in accordance with the appeals process outlined in the Research and Professional Degree Regulations.