ACU INDIGENOUS POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP
CONDITIONS OF AWARD

1. Introduction

1.1 The Australian Catholic University offers a Postgraduate Research Scholarship to support an Australian Indigenous person to undertake either a Masters or Doctorate level research degree program. The scholarship is provided to assist with general living costs.

2. Eligibility

2.1 A Master's degree applicant would normally be a graduate with a Bachelor’s degree of Honours or equivalent, or a graduate with relevant professional research experience. A Doctoral applicant would normally have attained a Bachelor’s degree at Honours 1 or 2A level, or hold a Masters degree.

2.2 When considering First 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 First Class Honours, provided a justification for the rating is provided;

(b) assess other qualifications as equating to a First 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.

2.3 Applicants must be of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. The definition used by the Federal Government as their working definition, in state legislation and by the High Court, should be the only acceptable definition of Aboriginality. This definition is a three-part definition requiring all three parts to be established for Aboriginality to be recognised:

- descent (the individual can prove that a parent is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent);
- self-identification (the individual identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander); and
- community recognition (the individual is accepted as such by the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community in which he/she lives).
Applicants will be expected to include in their supporting documentation proof of Aboriginality to the satisfaction of the scholarship committee. At the moment proof of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background and community acceptance is currently being reviewed for ACU, however for this round of scholarship applications, acceptable forms of identity will include a confirmation of Aboriginality from an Indigenous incorporated body or Centrelink and/or a support letter from a respected Indigenous community person such as an elder, religious person or police officer.

2.4 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 a selection committee comprising of the Dean of Research, Director Centre for Indigenous Education and Research and Research Training Standing Committee faculty nominees. The committee will determine the successful applicants on the basis of eligibility requirements and academic merit. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application at the conclusion of the ranking process.

2.5 The university may approve a part-time award for a scholarship however part-time awards are not available to applicants seeking to undertake paid employment on a full-time or on a substantial part-time basis.

(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).

2.6 The university may approve a part-time scholarship 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.

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

3. Stipends and Allowances

3.1 Living Allowance

3.1.1 The scholarship carries a living allowance at the rate of $30,000 per annum for a full-time recipient or pro-rata in the case of a part-time scholarship at $15,000 per annum. The tenure shall be up to two years (Masters) or four years (Doctorate). A tuition fee waiver is provided by ACU and students are not liable for fees.

3.2 Thesis Allowance

3.2.1 An allowance for costs associated with the production of a thesis will be paid upon presentation of original receipts to the Research Services Office at ACU. For a Master’s thesis this amount is up to $540 and for a PhD thesis $840.
3.2.2 The thesis allowance must be claimed within six months of submission of the thesis and no more than two years after expiry of the award.

3.2.3 The allowance is a contribution towards the costs of production of the thesis and does not include costs such as purchase and maintenance of computer equipment.

3.2.4 The thesis allowance is payable for costs associated with resubmission of a thesis, or the lodgement of bound copies of the thesis following approval. The combined total claim for submission and resubmission must not exceed the maximum amounts specified in 3.2.1 above.

3.3 The award of the scholarship does not cover any student-related charges/fees, candidates are responsible for paying such charges/fees themselves.

3.4 The taxation status of postgraduate awards is subject to taxation rulings by the Australian Taxation Office. It is the responsibility of the scholarship holder to seek her or his own taxation advice.

4. Tenure

4.1 When the university offers an award to a successful applicant, Graduate Research will provide the conditions of award to the candidate along with the offer letter.

4.2 The scholarship is awarded for full or part-time research and may be held for a maximum of two years (Masters) or four years (Doctorate). Annual renewal of the scholarship is dependent on the candidate maintaining satisfactory academic progress.

4.3 Periods of study already undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the award or undertaken during suspension of the award, will be deducted from the maximum period of tenure.

4.4 The scholarship holder must submit regular progress reports as and when required by the University.

5. Suspension of the Award

5.1 The Scholarship holder may be granted up to twelve months suspension of the award, subject to the approval of the relevant Associate Dean (Research).

5.2 A Candidate who withdraws from candidature automatically relinquishes the Scholarship.
6. Suspension of Payment or Termination of the Award

6.1 Payment of the scholarship may be temporarily suspended if the academic progress of the candidate, after consultation with the supervisor(s) and the Associate Dean of the Faculty is considered by the University’s Research Committee (URC) to be at an unsatisfactory level. Payment may be reinstated subject to conditions which will ensure that satisfactory academic progress is maintained.

6.2 The award will be terminated:

- if in the opinion of the URC, the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of award, and no suitable alternative arrangements can be made for continuation of the degree;

- when the award holder ceases to continue candidature and approval has not been obtained to suspend the award;

- on completion of the course, or the death, incapacity, resignation or withdrawal of the candidate. If this occurs, the URC may approve re-allocation of the scholarship to another candidate; or

- if 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 in accordance with section 5 above.

6.3 If the scholarship is terminated, it cannot be reactivated unless the termination occurred in error.

7. Employment

7.1 For full-time scholarship holders, it is expected that the candidate will devote on average at least 28 hours in a working week to their postgraduate study, whilst for part-time holders on average a minimum of 14 hours per week is expected. Any outside work must not interfere with the scholarship holder’s research program or academic progress.

8. Leave Arrangements

8.1 Recreational Leave

8.1.1 The scholarship holder is entitled to 20 days paid recreation leave per year, calculated on a pro-rata basis within the period of the award.

8.1.2 Recreation leave must be taken each year at a time mutually convenient with the postgraduate supervisor(s) and during the tenure of the award.

8.1.3 Payment in lieu of taking one’s annual recreation leave is not permitted.
8.2 Maternity Leave

8.2.1 Scholarship holders who have completed 12 months of their scholarship are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks paid maternity leave during the duration of the scholarship. Periods of paid maternity leave are in addition to the normal duration of the scholarship.

8.2.2 Unpaid maternity leave is to be accessed through the suspension provisions in section 5 above.

8.2.3 Scholarship 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.

8.2.4 Periods of paid parenting leave are in addition to the normal duration of the scholarship.

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

8.3 Sick Leave

8.3.1 A scholarship holder will receive up to 10 days paid sick leave each year of the award.

8.3.2 A scholarship holder will receive additional paid sick leave of up to a total of 12 weeks during their scholarship for periods of illness lasting longer than 10 days for which a medical certificate has been provided.

8.3.3 Sick leave entitlements (including additional sick leave) may also be used to cover leave for scholarship holders with family caring responsibilities.

9. Postgraduate Student Obligations

9.1 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

9.2 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;
- all other university policies related to research;
- the National Health and Medical Research Council codes on human and animal experimentation
- the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
Newly enrolling candidates must comply with ethical principles of integrity, respect for persons, justice and beneficence as outlined by the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Written approval from appropriate ethics committees, safety and other regulatory bodies must be obtained when required.

9.3 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.

10. Review Procedures

10.1 Students may request a review to the University Research Training Standing Committee (RTSC) for the resolution of any disputes that may arise concerning the award.

10.2 Reviews will only be heard on claims of procedural deficiencies in the assessment process and in accordance with the review process outlined in the Research and Professional Degree Regulations.