

# International Candidate commencement information

For international higher degree research candidates who have been approved for admission to ACU

This information is for candidates who have been approved for admission to an ACU Higher Degree Research (HDR) program and who are currently residing overseas.

In response to the threat of COVID-19, the Australian Government closed the country's border and limited entry to Australian citizens and permanent residents only. Holders of any other visa can only travel to Australia if they hold an approved travel exemption from the Department of Home Affairs and it is unclear when this policy will change. The latest travel restriction information can be found on the [DHA website](#).

As an international Higher Degree Research candidate, you are not currently permitted to travel to Australia to take up your place at ACU. The information below outlines various mechanisms and options available to you and is designed to assist you in deciding next steps for your HDR program enrolment.

We recommend that you review the information and discuss your options with your approved supervisory team in the first instance.

## Temporary offshore commencement of enrolment in an ACU HDR program

HDR candidates who have been approved for admission and who are unable to travel to Australia because of the border closures may apply to the University for temporary offshore commencement of their HDR program.

Applications for temporary offshore commencement are considered by the University on a case-by-case basis and will depend upon the candidate's current location and circumstances, the feasibility of the candidate's program of research from an offshore location, and supervisory support amongst other considerations.

If approved, temporary offshore commencement may normally only be undertaken on a part-time study-mode and candidates must possess a valid Australian student visa before offshore enrolment can commence.

If applying for temporary offshore commencement of enrolment, candidates and their supervisors will be asked to detail how candidature enrolment (research project, supervision, milestones and ethics approvals) would be successfully managed over a period of 12 calendar months from proposed date of commencement. The mapping of a 12 month timeframe allows the candidate and supervisors to carefully consider the practicalities of an offshore enrolment and assists the university in assessing the feasibility

If an offshore enrolment request is approved, the initial approved duration would be for six (6) calendar months, though candidates may apply to the University for further temporary offshore enrolment if, at that time, travel is still not permitted to Australia. Requests for further temporary offshore enrolment would also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Candidates who are approved for temporary part-time offshore study load must change to full-time load as soon as they arrive onshore in Australia.

Candidates who commence offshore on a part-time study load may find, once they're onshore, that they need to apply for an eCoE and visa extension (ACU's international student advisors can provide guidance on eCoE and visa extensions when required).

Candidates should be aware of, and will be asked to acknowledge, possible implications of commencing offshore on a part-time study load on their visa.

During the period of approved offshore temporary enrolment, should the candidate no longer be able to undertake meaningful research for their project (eg if a local COVID-19 lockdown is imposed and the candidate can no longer access necessary materials or infrastructure), the candidate must immediately suspend their candidature until such time that they can recommence meaningful research.

Candidates who are approved for temporary offshore commencement and who have been awarded a stipend scholarship would not normally be eligible to receive stipend payments for the period of time in which they are enrolled in their HDR program and are located offshore. Candidates who can undertake lab-based research with an ACU affiliate, partner or collaborator, or who can demonstrate that they can undertake meaningful research with an ACU affiliate, partner or collaborator situated at their offshore location, may be considered for stipend scholarship payments for the period of time in which they are enrolled in the HDR program and located offshore. Such stipend payments will only be made into a account held in the candidate's name at an Australian [Authorised Deposit-taking Institution \(ADI\)](#). Requests for full-time commencement with stipend can be considered but must be specified in the application form.

For further details on the parameters around temporary offshore commencement of an HDR program and to submit an application, please download the 'Temporary offshore commencement application form' from the ACU [International Research Students information](#) page (refer Next Steps towards bottom of the page).

### Deferral of Commencement

Candidates who are not eligible for or who do not wish to apply for temporary offshore commencement of enrolment may request a deferral of their ACU HDR candidature commencement date to another Research Term.

Candidates should note that commencement of HDR programs normally only occurs during Research Terms A or C, therefore deferrals are considered to those Research Terms only. Research Term dates for 2022 can be found [here](#).

In considering a deferral of enrolment, the University would need to consider the availability of supervision, availability of resources and any impacts a delayed commencement would have on the proposed program of research, amongst other matters.

Candidates who have been awarded a stipend scholarship and/or tuition fee waiver must specifically request a deferral of their stipend scholarship and tuition fee waiver when they submit their request for deferral of enrolment in the HDR program.

A deferral of candidature does not guarantee a deferral of stipend scholarship and/or tuition fee waiver.

For all commencement or stipend scholarship and/or tuition fee waiver deferrals, the candidate should email Candidature Services [res.cand@acu.edu.au](mailto:res.cand@acu.edu.au) outlining their deferral request. Candidature Services will facilitate the University's consideration of the request and notify the candidate of the outcome.

For further information about deferrals refer to [Higher Degree Regulation 5.5](#).

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## Support with costs when relocating to Australia

Under the University's [Research Training Program Scholarship Policy](#) (clause 4.3.3) candidates may apply to the University for financial support for costs associated with relocating to Australia to take up enrolment in an ACU HDR program.

Normally the value of the RTP Allowance Scholarship (Relocation) will be up to \$2,000 AUD. At the discretion of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), an additional allowance may be approved for students who relocate with dependents.

Applications will be assessed by the University on a case-by-case basis.

Full details and application instructions can be found in the [Research Training Program \(RTP\) Allowance Scholarship \(Relocation\) Application form](#).

## Application for a Travel Exemption from Department of Home Affairs

The Australian government does not currently permit student visa holders to enter Australia. In certain circumstances the government may approve a travel exemption for a student visa holder to travel to Australia.

The University recommends candidates monitor the [Department of Home Affairs](#) website for updates on travel restrictions and consider applying for a travel exemption once their student visa has been granted.

Some helpful links are below:

- [Visa Processing Times](#)
- [Travel Restrictions and Exemptions](#)
- [Victorian mandatory quarantine](#)
- [New South Wales mandatory quarantine](#)
- [Queensland mandatory quarantine](#)