

Swinburne Research

# Conditions of Award Research Training Program Stipend (RTPS)



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SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY  
OF TECHNOLOGY

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## 1 Introduction

This document is based on the [Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#) and is intended as a short guide to entitlements and requirements for new Research Training Program Stipend (RTPS) Scholarship students. From time to time, changes are made to these Conditions of Award. In this event, a revised document will be made available to award holders, on the [Research Scholarships webpage](#).

## 2 Definitions

The terms used within the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#) have the same meaning as in the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#). The following terms are defined specifically for these Conditions of Award:

<i>the Act</i>	means the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i>
<i>AQF</i>	means the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013
<i>Continuing Student</i>	means either:  a student whose period of support under the Research Training Scheme, International Postgraduate Research Scholarships or Australian Postgraduate Awards would terminate on or after 1 January 2017  or  a student who has received an offer of support by the University under the Research Training Scheme, International Postgraduate Research Scholarships or Australian Postgraduate Awards, and accepted this offer of support, and whose offer of support was scheduled to commence on or after 1 January 2017
<i>Course of study</i>	means an accredited HDR course leading to a Research Doctorate or a Research Masters
<i>Domestic Student</i>	<i>means a student who is not an overseas student</i>
<i>FOE</i>	means a Field of Education code specified in the <i>ASCED</i>
<i>Full-time student load</i>	in respect of a <i>course of study</i> , is at least 75 per cent of an equivalent <i>full-time student load</i> in the period for which <i>RTP Scholarship</i> support is received
<i>HDR</i>	means a Higher Degree by Research that is a Research Doctorate or a Research Masters for which at least two-thirds of the student load for the course is required as research work
<i>HEP</i>	means a higher education provider as specified in section 16-15 of <i>the Act</i>
<i>overseas student</i>	means a person who is not an Australian citizen and is enrolled, or proposes to become enrolled in a course of study with a higher education provider,  but does not include:  a person entitled to stay in Australia, or to enter and stay in Australia, without any limitation as to time; or a New Zealand citizen; or a diplomatic or consular representative of New Zealand, a member of the staff of such a representative or the spouse, de facto partner (within the meaning of the Acts Interpretation Act 1901) or dependent relative of such a representative.
<i>Part-time student load</i>	in respect of a course of study, is less than 75% of an equivalent full-time student load in the period for which RTP Scholarship support is received
<i>Research Doctorate</i>	means a Level 10 Doctoral Degree (Research) qualification as described in the AQF
<i>Research Masters</i>	means a Level 9 Masters Degree (Research) qualification as described in the AQF
<i>RTP</i>	means the Research Training Program
<i>RTP Allowance</i>	is a type of RTP Scholarship to assist with ancillary costs incurred by an HDR student in undertaking an HDR
<i>RTP Fees Offset</i>	is a type of RTP Scholarship to assist with course fees that would otherwise be payable by an HDR student
<i>RTP Scholarship</i>	is a form of support awarded to a student in terms of the following support items: RTP Allowances, RTP Fees Offset and RTP Stipend
<i>RTP Stipend</i>	is a type of RTP Scholarship to assist students with general living costs
<i>Suspension</i>	means a period of time during which a scholarship holder is not receiving <i>RTP Scholarship</i> support, which has been approved in accordance with the University
<i>University</i>	means Higher Education Provider, in most cases in this guide, Swinburne University of Technology (Swinburne).

### 3 Description of Scholarship

Research Training Program Stipend (RTPS) Scholarships are awarded to students of exceptional research potential enrolled in an HDR course of study to assist with general living costs.

### 4 Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for an RTPS, a student must:

- be a domestic student or an overseas student enrolled in an accredited HDR course of study at an Australian HEP; and
- not be receiving income from another source to support that student's general living costs while undertaking their course of study if that income is greater than 75 per cent of that student's RTP Stipend rate. Income unrelated to the student's course of study or income received for the student's course of study but not for the purposes of supporting general living costs is not to be taken into account.

### 5 Application, Selection and Offer Processes

RTPS Scholarships are awarded as a result of a competitive selection process as determined by the University in accordance with the [Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#). As part of this process the University has the right to give priority to different types of students, and therefore may use selection criteria to preference applications as part of the competitive selection process. For example, selection criteria could include giving preference to:

- students undertaking a Research Doctorate
- domestic students
- current students who have not completed more than 2 years of their HDR course of study
- students who hold a Bachelor Degree with first class Honours (or equivalent)\*
- students engaging in a particular discipline area
- indigenous students
- students undertaking an HDR course of study for the first time
- students with a full-time study load

\*If a student does not hold a Bachelor degree with first class honours, then the University may determine that the student has demonstrated an equivalent level of academic attainment. The University may consider previous study, relevant work experience, research publications, referees' reports and other research experience.

RTPS Scholarships are typically made available in annual scholarship rounds. When scholarship rounds are open, information about the application process and specific selection criteria for the round, is made available on the [Research Scholarships webpage](#). Applicants will be directed to apply by following the candidature and scholarship application process described on the [Research Degrees webpage](#).

It should be noted that the University is not currently opening RTPS applications to Research Masters candidates.

The competitive assessment process may take into the account the following:

- candidature and scholarship eligibility requirements
- advertised selection criteria for the round
- previous academic achievement and University attended
- referee reports
- linkage of research topic with industry
- publication experience

Successful RTPS applicants will receive a scholarship offer letter, detailing the conditions of their award, from Swinburne Research. All RTPS scholarship offers are conditional on meeting the requirements for candidature at Swinburne.

Unsuccessful RTPS applicants will receive email notification of the outcome, and, if they meet the minimum entry requirements for candidature, will be invited to have their application considered for candidature only.

## 6 Duration of an RTPS

The duration of a full-time RTPS is **three years** for a student undertaking a Research Doctorate at a full time student load or for six years for a part time student load. The date of first enrolment is usually the commencement date for the scholarship, except where the student is already enrolled at the time of award. Contact Swinburne Research for further information (see contact details at the end of this document).

The duration of an RTPS will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the RTPS.

The duration of an RTPS will be increased by any periods of paid leave of absence approved by the University.

Any periods of suspension approved by the University do not contribute to the period of support.

Swinburne University may also approve an extension to the duration of an RTPS for a Research Doctorate student of up to six months subject to satisfactory academic progress. For more information about scholarship extensions, please consult the [Application for Scholarship Extension Guidelines](#).

## 7 Changes to Enrolment

### 7.1 Field of Education (FOE) change

A change to the student's FOE will have no impact on the RTPS.

### 7.2 Transferring to or from another HEP

Students who transfer from Swinburne University to another university may continue to receive their RTPS only if the university the student transfers to (the new provider) agrees to its continuation and subject to the new provider having sufficient RTPS grant amounts of its own available to fund the student.

Students may transfer from another university to Swinburne with an RTPS only if Swinburne University agrees to its continuation and subject to Swinburne University having sufficient RTPS grant amounts available.

Swinburne University must ensure it has received information from the former provider on any RTPS payment a transferring student has received and the duration of the RTPS already consumed.

### 7.3 Amendment to study load

The University may approve the award of a part-time RTPS for a student in exceptional circumstances.

The exceptional circumstances must relate to significant caring commitments or a medical condition, such as:

- caring responsibilities for a pre-school child; or
- caring responsibilities for school-aged children as a sole parent with limited access to outside support; or
- caring responsibilities for an invalid or disabled spouse, child or parent; or
- a medical condition, the existence of which is supported by medical certification, and which limits the student's capacity to undertake full-time study.

In determining exceptional circumstances when approving a part-time RTPS, the University may not determine that a student is in exceptional circumstances unless it is satisfied that the student's personal or family circumstances are such that it would be unreasonable to expect the student to study on a full-time basis.

A student who has been approved for a part-time RTPS may revert to full-time study at any time with the permission of the University.

To calculate the remaining period of scholarship after conversion of an RTPS from part-time to full-time the period of time remaining on the RTPS is halved.

To calculate the remaining period of scholarship after conversion of an RTPS from full-time to part-time the period of time remaining on the RTPS is doubled.

## 7.4 Candidature conversion

Applications from Research Masters candidates are not currently being considered for RTPS Scholarships. Offers will be made to candidates enrolled in Research Doctoral studies only, with no provision to convert to Research Masters.

# 8 Leave Entitlements

## 8.1 Annual leave

Students are entitled to receive up to 20 working days (4 weeks) paid annual leave and 10 working days paid sick leave for each year of the *RTP Stipend*. These leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the *RTP Stipend* but will be forfeited when the *RTP Stipend* is terminated.

Periods of annual leave and sick leave (of 10 days or less) will not result in a suspension of enrolment and therefore will be included for the purpose of calculating candidature and RTPS Scholarship end dates.

## 8.2 Leave of Absence

### Unpaid Leave of Absence

Unless otherwise indicated on the Leave of Absence application form, leave will be processed as Unpaid Leave of Absence. During Unpaid Leave of Absence, the scholarship payments will be stopped for the equivalent number of calendar days to the period of leave. At the time that the Unpaid Leave of Absence is approved, scholarship recipients will be advised, via email, of the date when the scholarship will be stopped and when it will be restarted.

If the Leave of Absence is unpaid, RTPS payments will be stopped for the full period of leave and the scholarship end date will be extended by the same number of days as the approved period of leave.

### Paid Leave of Absence

In the case of approved Paid Leave of Absence, the scholarship payments will not be stopped during the Leave of Absence (or may only be stopped for part of the leave). If Paid Leave of Absence is sought, the student **must** clearly indicate this on the Leave of Absence application and provide relevant supporting documentation, such as a medical certificate.

If the Leave of Absence is paid, RTPS payments will continue during the period of leave (or for part of the leave period) and the scholarship end date will be extended by the same number of days as the approved period of leave.

Paid Leave of Absence can only be sought in the following circumstances:

- *Sick Leave*

Students may receive additional paid sick leave of up to a total of 12 weeks during their scholarship for periods of illness **lasting longer than ten days** and for which a medical certificate has been provided.

Sick leave entitlements may be used to cover leave for students with family caring responsibilities, subject to the usual practice of the University.

- **Maternity Leave**

Students who have completed at least 12 months of their scholarship are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks paid maternity leave over the duration of the scholarship. Subject to the usual practice of the University, paid leave may also be approved if the student has adopted a child.

Maternity leave must be for an unbroken period.

Students who are partners of women giving birth, and who have completed at least 12 months of their scholarship, may be entitled to a period of paid parenting leave at the time of the birth or adoption, subject to the usual practice of the University.

### **Applying for Leave of Absence**

Students may apply for Leave of Absence as per section 3.1.3 of the [Research Training Statement of Practice](#).

Students may apply for Maternity Leave as per section 3.1.5 of the [Research Training Statement of Practice](#).

The Leave of Absence application form can be downloaded by clicking on the candidature tab on the [HDR Forms webpage](#).

International students should read the Leave of Absence form very carefully to assess whether they are eligible to apply for Leave of Absence.

### **Suspensions during Leave of Absence**

Students may apply to Swinburne University to suspend a scholarship during a period of leave of absence for up to 12 months. In exceptional circumstances, students may apply for suspensions beyond 12 months. The approval of all suspensions will be at the discretion of Swinburne University.

## **9 RTPS Value and Payments**

### **9.1 RTPS Value and Indexation Arrangements**

The value of an RTPS over the full year in 2017 is **\$26,682**.

If a student selected to receive an RTPS is approved by the University to undertake an HDR on a part-time student load basis, the student's part-time RTP Stipend rate will be 50 per cent of the student's full-time RTPS rate.

The RTPS stipend will be indexed for subsequent years in accordance with Part 5-6 of the Act.

### **9.2 RTPS Allowance (Relocation)**

Students in receipt of an RTPS are also offered an allowance toward the cost of relocating themselves, their spouse and dependants to a new place of residence within Australia where this is necessary to enable the student to undertake their HDR.

The maximum relocation allowance which may be received by a student is calculated by allowing:

**\$505** for each eligible adult, and

**\$255** for each eligible child.

The absolute maximum value of relocation expenses that a student may receive is \$1,455 (if also claiming for accompanying family members, please refer to eligibility criteria for accompanying family members stated below).

To make a claim for relocation, you will need to present original receipts to Swinburne Research.

Only costs for air travel, travel by car or removal expenses to the new place of residence are allowable.

Expenses for the cost of any accommodation or meals obtained during the course of travel cannot be reimbursed through relocation allowance.

For the purposes of relocation allowance an eligible adult is either a spouse or adult dependant.

A spouse is a person who is married to, or in a bona fide de facto relationship with, the student.

An adult dependent is a person for whom the student or their spouse has substantial caring responsibilities.

An eligible child is a natural or adopted child of the student or their spouse, who is:

- less than 18 years of age; or
- less than 25 years of age and is undertaking full-time study.

### **9.3 RTPS Allowance (Thesis)**

Students in receipt of an RTPS are also offered an allowance toward the cost of thesis preparation and printing.

The maximum value of thesis allowance which may be received by a student is **\$840** for a Doctoral thesis.

The University will make reimbursement payments to students for eligible claims for thesis allowance up to the approved maximum amount specified in these Conditions of Award.

An eligible claim for thesis allowance is a claim made by a student for the costs of producing a Doctoral thesis. The claim may include the cost of printing, binding and proofreading. These costs may include costs associated with the re-submission of a thesis, or the lodgement of hardbound copies of the thesis following approval.

A claim for thesis allowance is not an eligible claim unless the student has produced complete receipts for the claim and made the claim within one year of submission of the thesis and no more than two years after termination of the RTPS. The amount paid will be up to the maximum rate applicable at the time of submission of the thesis. The allowance is a contribution to the costs of production of the thesis and does not include costs such as purchase of computer equipment.

If a student is required to resubmit the thesis for re-examination, he/she may claim the thesis preparation allowance for costs associated with the resubmission. The claim must be made within six months of the resubmission date and within 2 years of the termination of the award.

The combined total of allowance for submission and resubmission must not exceed the maximum amounts specified above.

### **9.4 Payment Process**

Each year, the University must pay each student the full value of their RTPS stipend unless that student has commenced late or suspended their RTPS. Where a student is not enrolled over the full period of the year, because of a late commencement or periods of deferral, the University must provide at least the proportion of the annual stipend for the period in which study is undertaken for that year.

The University must make fortnightly payments to students in respect of their annual stipend. Payments may only be made directly to the student's Australian bank account through the University payroll.

## **10 Employment Commitments**

Employment commitments of RTPS recipients must not exceed a total of 8 hours per week. Students may only undertake work with the approval of the University. The University may not approve a student undertaking work unless it is satisfied that the work will not interfere with the student's capacity to complete their study within the normal timeframe. Work commitments cannot be accepted as grounds for an extension of the duration of the RTPS.



If a student is seeking to take part in an internship or industry placement they should contact [HDRscholarships@swin.edu.au](mailto:HDRscholarships@swin.edu.au) for advice on how this could impact their enrolment and RTPS.

## 11 Termination of an RTPS

Swinburne University monitors students' ongoing eligibility to ensure that the students continue to meet the eligibility requirements set out in these Conditions of Award and University policies as they relate to HDR students. Continuation of the scholarship is dependent on the student maintaining satisfactory progress.

An RTPS will be terminated:

- if the student ceases to meet the eligibility requirements specified in part 4 of these Conditions of Award, other than during a period in which a suspension has been approved; or
- if the student ceases to meet the selection criteria for which the award of the RTPS was based on; or
- if, in the opinion of the University, the program of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance with these Conditions of Award and the offer of the RTPS; or
- if the University determines that a student is guilty of serious academic misconduct; or
- once the maximum duration of the RTPS has been reached; or
- if the student does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of deferral and has not arranged to extend that period of deferral; or
- if the student fails to maintain satisfactory progress, as determined by the University; or
- on submission of the thesis for examination; or
- on withdrawal from the course of study; or
- if the student's candidature in the course of study is terminated by the University. The grounds for termination of candidature are described in Chapter 9 of the [Research Training Regulations](#).

If an RTPS is terminated, it cannot be re-activated unless the termination occurred in error.

More information about Termination of Candidature is outlined in Chapter 9 of the [Research Training Regulations](#)

## 12 Acknowledgement of an RTPS Scholarship

The Commonwealth's contribution must be acknowledged when, at any time during or after completion of a HDR, the recipient of an RTPS Scholarship, his/her supervisor or any other party, publishes or produces material such as books, articles, newsletters or other literary or artistic works which relate to the research project carried out by the recipient of the RTPS Scholarship.

The Commonwealth's contribution must be acknowledged in a prominent place and in an appropriate form. The acknowledgement must include the mention of the student's support through an "*Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship*".

## 13 Contact details

Staff members in Swinburne Research are always happy to answer any questions you might have. They can be contacted on:

Phone: 9214 3859

Email: [HDRscholarships@swin.edu.au](mailto:HDRscholarships@swin.edu.au)

Website: <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/research/funding-grants/scholarships/>