Higher Degree by Research Student Scholarship Procedure

1 Purpose

To outline requirements and principles for the selection of candidates for, and the administration of, Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Scholarships.

2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all HDR Scholarships offered by the University.

3 Procedure Overview

This Procedure provides a framework for the administration and allocation of HDR Scholarships and ensures effective use of the University's investment in HDR Scholarships. The Scholarship schemes within the scope of this Procedure include but are not limited to:

Category A

- Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarships
- UniSQ Postgraduate Research Stipend Scholarships
- UniSQ International Stipend Research Scholarships

Category B

- Externally funded Scholarships
- UniSQ-funded Scholarships (Category A), but which are allocated to support specific projects

Category C

- UniSQ International Tuition Fees Research Scholarships

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This Procedure does not apply to:

- Research Training Program Fees Offset Scholarships
- Scholarships that are not paid through the University

Please see the Research Training Program Scholarship Procedure for information on Fees Offset Scholarships and Stipend Scholarships made available via the RTP.

This Procedure aligns with the:

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021:* Standard 4.1 Research, Standard 4.2 Research Training

4 Procedures

4.1 Eligibility

HDR Scholarships provided by the University are typically offered on the basis of Academic Merit and the process is competitive. Eligibility for Admission to an HDR Program does not guarantee the award of a Scholarship.

Applicants for Scholarships will only be considered for Scholarships once they have been deemed eligible for Admission or have been admitted to an HDR Program.

Domestic Applicants who are commencing or continuing in an HDR Program are eligible to apply for Stipend Scholarships.

International Applicants who are commencing or continuing in an HDR Program are eligible to apply for a Stipend Scholarship, which may include Fees Offset.

To be eligible for Scholarships, Applicants must be available for full-time Enrolment and be located in Australia (except for periods of approved fieldwork outside of Australia).

For specific eligibility criteria for each Scholarship, please refer to the University Scholarships website.

Category B Scholarships may have additional eligibility requirements, which are outlined on the University Scholarships website.

4.2 Applications

Scholarship application dates are published on the University Scholarships website.

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It is the Applicant's responsibility to provide all required documentation for consideration of a Scholarship application by the Scholarship closing date. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

4.3 Selection process

Scholarships are awarded as a result of a competitive selection process. Scholarship applications will be assessed on Academic Merit; previous Research outputs and Research experience of the Applicant; supervisory record of the proposed supervisory team; appropriateness of expertise; quality of the Research proposal; and alignment with the University's Research flagship areas.

The full selection criteria for each Scholarship being offered are available on the University Scholarships website.

4.3.1 Scholarship application criteria

The Scholarship application criteria will be applied according to the scoring matrix in the Higher Degree by Research Student Scholarship Guidelines.

Criterion 1 - Academic Achievement

Weight	20%
Purpose	Assess the quality of the candidate's academic performance.
Party responsible for responding to criterion	Student applying for Scholarship
Information that should be included on the response to the selection criterion	• Details of undergraduate degrees. If applicable, specific class of Honours and related area of study. • Details of postgraduate degrees, specifically evidence of Research competence. • List of the cumulative/Final Grade point average for all degrees listed (on a 7-point scale). • List of academic awards and/or prizes, particularly those related to Research courses/and or activities.

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Criterion 2 - Research Capability

Weight	20%
Purpose	Assess evidence of Research preparedness and capability.
Party responsible for responding to criterion	Student applying for Scholarship
Information that should be included on the response to the selection criterion	• Details of previous Research experience and how these relate to the proposed project. • Details of Research Outputs, such as: ◦ Research publications and publications under review (including impact factor, full citation and DOI link to each publication). ◦ Research presentations/conferences. ◦ Research internship/volunteering experience (if applicable). ◦ Creative works (if applicable).

Criterion 3 - Research Project and Environment

Weight	40%
Purpose	Assess the quality of the Research project and environment.
Party responsible for responding to criterion	Student applying for Scholarship, with input from supervisory team
Information that should be included on the response to the selection	• Alignment with UniSQ Research flagship areas, including: ◦ The relevance of the Research

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criterion	to the Australian and international Research contexts. ◦ External support for the Research project demonstrated by funding or in-kind support from external stakeholders. • Project title and preliminary proposal. • Details of how the project integrates into a defined area of Research at the University. • Details of the expected impacts of the proposed Research. • Details of resource requirements and available funding and external support for the project.

Criterion 4 - Supervisory Team

Weight	20%
Purpose	Assess the quality of advisory team including record of successful supervision, appropriate advisory load, and complementary expertise.
Party responsible for responding to criterion	Supervisory team
Information that should be included on the response to the selection criterion	• Publication records. • Complementary expertise among the supervisory team. • Details of how the Student/project will be supported by the supervisory team in terms of mentoring, supporting candidate development, time allocated to the project, supervisor capacity (i.e., the amount of time and resources that the supervisor can allocate). • Details of resource requirements and available funding and external support for the project.

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These weightings may be updated with the approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research). Any change to weightings will be reflected in the Higher Degree by Research Student Scholarship Guidelines.

Project-specific HDR Scholarships may have additional or varied selection criteria to what is listed here. Please refer to the University Scholarships website for specific Scholarship criteria.

4.3.2 Selection panels

Scholarship applications will be assessed and ranked in accordance with the Higher Degree by Research Student Scholarship Guidelines by selection panels following initial assessment within the supervisor and Students academic unit. The panels will reflect the relevant University flagship areas. Each panel will typically comprise at least five senior academics from different academic areas within the University, including Schools, Colleges, Research Institutes and Centres, as well as the Dean, Graduate Research School (GRS) who will act as panel chair for each panel. Panels must:

- Declare and record any panel member's Conflict of Interest with an Applicant for a Scholarship, including personal or professional relationships and instances where they have taught or supervised the Applicant
- Assess and rank each application on the merit of the provided information against the selection criteria for that Scholarship

In the case of Category B Scholarships, the Principal Investigator or external funder may provide a recommendation to the Dean (GRS) for consideration. The recommendation should include an assessment of candidates against the Scholarship application weightings and the Scholarship selection criteria. The Decision to award the Scholarship is made by the Dean (GRS).

4.3.3 Roles and responsibilities

Activity	Responsibility	Steps
Formation of selection panel	Dean (GRS)	Appoint and confirm panel members, in accordance with section 4.3.2.
Referral of applications	GRS	• For new Applicants: provide Scholarship application documents and candidature application form. • For existing Students: provide Scholarship application documents and original candidature application,

		including any relevant new information.
Selection panel assessment	Selection panel (individually)	All panel members declare any Conflicts of Interest to the GRS, prior to completing assessments. Panel members independently complete assessment against the selection criteria (using scoring matrix outlined in the Higher Degree by Research Student Scholarship Guidelines), provide a list of Applicant rankings to GRS.
Compilation of master list	GRS	GRS collates the scores allocated by the individual panel members and compiles a ranked master list of all Scholarship Applicants.
Panel consensus	Selection panel (as a group)	Panel comes to a consensus regarding the order of Applicants, based on the list provided by GRS, and provides the GRS with a final master list.
Scholarship recommendations	Dean (GRS)	Panel-ranked master list and associated documentation is compiled by the GRS and provided to the Dean (GRS) who considers the panel rankings and determines the final list of recommended Scholarship allocations.
Scholarship allocations	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research)	Dean (GRS) provides the final list (including individual panel scores) to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) who considers and approves Scholarship allocations. The Decision of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) is final and no internal review or Appeal process is available.
Notification to Applicants	GRS	The GRS issues a formal offer of Scholarship to successful Applicants, including the terms and conditions of the Scholarship. If an awardee declines a Scholarship offer, the Scholarship will typically be offered to the highest-ranking non-awardee.
Report to Research Training Sub-Committee	Dean (GRS)	Report on final Scholarship allocations to be provided to the Research Training Sub-Committee.
Report to Research	Dean (GRS)	Report on final Scholarship allocations to be

Committee		provided to the Research Committee.

4.3.4 Notification of outcomes

All Scholarship offers will be sent in writing by the GRS in the form of a letter of offer to the email address indicated on the Scholarship application. Expected year of commencement, terms and conditions of the Scholarship, payment details and any other relevant information will be included in the letter of offer. Recipients must sign and return the statement of terms and conditions provided with the letter of offer by the date specified to the GRS and must be enrolled in the relevant HDR Program for payments to commence.

Where a recipient must complete specific requirements prior to receiving a formal offer of a Scholarship, they will be provided with a conditional letter of offer, which will outline the activities to be completed in order to receive a formal offer. Where a recipient has not demonstrated that they have completed the specific requirements as outlined in their letter of offer, their offer of Scholarship will be withdrawn.

4.4 Progress

Students in receipt of a Scholarship are required to make satisfactory progress in their studies and maintain active Enrolment in their program. Progress and Enrolment will be monitored in accordance with the Higher Degree by Research Student Progress Procedure and Higher Degree by Research Student Admissions and Enrolments Procedure. If the University does not consider that progress is satisfactory, the Scholarship may be suspended or terminated.

Scholarship duration will typically continue from the scholarship commencement date until either the Scholarship end date, submission of an examinable Thesis, or such date as the Student requests scholarship termination or the Student become ineligible to receive it under the terms of UniSQ's policies and procedures.

Cotutelle PhD Students may have additional requirements to maintain satisfactory progress - please refer to the Cotutelle PhD Program Procedure for further details.

4.4.1 Suspension of Scholarship

If a Student is unable to pursue their HDR Program for any reason, they must notify the University immediately in writing. The Scholarship will be either suspended or withdrawn.

In the instance a Student goes on an approved Leave of Absence that is outside of the standard recreation or sick leave, they will have their Scholarship suspended until they return to study. Students must contact the GRS 10 days prior to the recommencement of their studies to arrange the resumption of their Scholarship.

If a Student is subject to performance management in accordance with the Higher Degree by Research Student Progress Procedure, typically their Scholarship will be suspended pending the outcome.

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4.4.2 Withdrawal of Scholarship

A Student's Scholarship will cease upon submission of the Thesis for examination, or at the end of the Scholarship period, whichever is earlier. The Scholarship will be withdrawn before this time if the Student:

- Has their candidature discontinued
- Withdraws from the HDR Program
- Ceases to be enrolled and has not requested a period of leave
- Ceases to meet eligibility requirements, including changes to Research topic and/or supervision where it impedes the Scholarship

As per 4.6.3, if a Student requests a change of Research topic or supervisory team, the terms and conditions of their Scholarship will be reviewed if the Student:

- Does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of leave
- Ceases to be enrolled full-time and does not have approval to receive the Scholarship part-time, in accordance with section 4.6.1
- Has not provided true, accurate and complete information in relation to their Scholarship application and/or Scholarship tenure
- Is in breach of this Procedure or any condition of the Scholarship as outlined in the Scholarship letter of offer

4.5 Undertaking paid employment

HDR Students receiving a Category A HDR Scholarship may undertake part-time paid employment up to a maximum of 20 hours per week. Students are responsible for ensuring that employment does not interfere with their Research progress or scholarship obligations.

Employment arrangements, and any changes to these arrangements, must be discussed with the supervisory team to ensure employment does not compromise Research or HDR Program progress.

For Category B HDR Scholarships, HDR Students must comply with the terms of their scholarship agreement, which may stipulate different requirements regarding undertaking paid employment.

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International Students should refer to, and comply with, their visa conditions for any requirements regarding undertaking employment outside of their HDR Program.

4.6 Leave

Unless otherwise specified in the Scholarship letter of offer, Scholarship holders are entitled to the leave types listed below:

Leave Type and Entitlement	Conditions
Leave of Absence (Unpaid)	Scholarship holders may apply for unpaid Leave of Absence in accordance with the Higher Degree by Research Student Admissions and Enrolments Procedure. Any periods of approved unpaid Leave of Absence will not impact the total duration of the Scholarship, although the Thesis submission date will be extended by the length of program leave taken.
Annual (Recreational)	20 University Business Days are available per annum to HDR Students for recreational purposes. This will accrue and roll over, but will not extend the Students candidature. Scholarship holders are entitled to 20 University Business Days per annum of paid leave for recreational purposes. This leave is to be taken during the Scholarship period. Students should inform their supervisors when they take this leave and apply for it online.
Personal (Sick)	10 University Business Days are available per annum to HDR Students. This will accrue and roll over, but will not extend the Students candidature. Scholarship holders are entitled to 10 University Business Days per annum of paid sick leave. Sick leave may also be used for Students with family caring responsibilities. Students should inform their supervisors when taking this leave and apply in writing for it through the GRS.
Parental	Scholarship holders who have completed 12 months (full-time equivalent) of their candidature are entitled to receive 20 weeks of paid parental leave for each child an RTP Stipend recipient will be the primary carer of on the birth or adoption of that child.

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	1. Parental leave must be claimed in the first 12 months of a child's life (or in the first 12 months after adoption in the case of adoption). In cases where candidates are not eligible for parental leave, they can apply for a Leave of Absence, subject to approval by the Dean (GRS). 2. If the Scholarship holder is the primary carer of the child, the holder is entitled to a maximum of 20 weeks of parental leave during the Scholarship. 3. If the Scholarship holder is the partner of the primary carer of the child, the holder is entitled to a maximum of 10 working days' parental leave during the Scholarship. Applications for parental leave must be submitted to the GRS with an accompanying medical certificate and/or other appropriate documentation. Paid parental leave will extend the Scholarship beyond the normal Scholarship tenure. Non-scholarship holding HDR Students can apply for Parental Leave without pay in line with the above conditions.
Other - Carer's	3 University Business Days are available per annum to HDR Students.
Other - Compassionate	3 University Business Days are available per annum to HDR Students.
Other - Gender Affirmation	20 University Business Days are available per annum to HDR Students.
Other - Family and Domestic Violence	10 University Business Days are available per annum to HDR Students.
Other - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural and Ceremonial	10 University Business Days are available per annum to HDR Students.
Other - Jury Service	Leave during the period of jury selection and jury.
Other - Defence Force Reserve Training	16 University Business Days are available per annum to HDR Students.
Other - Special Leave	Negotiable at the discretion of the Dean (GRS).
Other - Community Service (voluntary emergency management)	Negotiable at the discretion of the Dean (GRS).

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International candidates must check the conditions of their visa before applying for leave. Candidature and Scholarship will not be extended due to periods of parental leave that have not been taken.

4.7 Variation to Scholarship

4.7.1 Part-time studies

In exceptional circumstances, a Scholarship holder may be approved to continue their Scholarship on a part-time basis and their Stipend will be paid at a part-time rate. Applications for part-time Stipends must be made in writing to the Dean (GRS). International candidates can only receive a part-time award if permitted under the conditions of their visa.

Part-time Scholarships will only be approved if the candidate can demonstrate the following:

- Significant family caring responsibilities that prevent the candidate from undertaking a Full-Time Study load.
- A disability or ongoing medical condition that prevents the candidate from undertaking a Full-Time Study load.
- Other Special Circumstances in accordance with the Assessment of Special Circumstances Procedure.

The Student must provide documents in support to their request to reduce to a part-time Enrolment. Scholarship Students should note that any reduction in Scholarship amounts may have tax implications and they are encouraged to speak to a tax professional.

4.7.2 Extensions

In exceptional and unexpected circumstances, a Scholarship holder may apply in writing to the Dean (GRS) for an extension to their Scholarship. This request should be made as soon as the Student is aware of any circumstances that may impede their ability to complete their program within their Scholarship timeframe.

A Scholarship can be awarded to a doctoral candidate up to a maximum of three and a half years (FTE) with the approval of the Dean (GRS).

Students should refer to the Assessment of Special Circumstances Procedure for further information on unexpected circumstances.

4.7.3 Changes to Research project and/or supervision

All applications to change Research project topics or supervisory team members must be made in writing to the GRS. The GRS will review the request against the Scholarship terms and

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conditions provided to the Student when the Scholarship was awarded. Students with external funding or funding associated with a specific Research topic must gain the written approval of the funding provider prior to submitting the change request to the GRS.

4.8 Student grievances

Students who disagree with a Decision made by the University regarding Scholarship termination, withdrawal, Suspension, or variation may request a review of the Decision, in accordance with the Student Grievance Resolution Procedure.

5 References

Nil.

6 Schedules

This procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

7 Procedure Information

Accountable Officer	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research)
Responsible Officer	Dean (Graduate Research School)
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Higher Degree by Research Student Policy
Subordinate Schedules	
Approved Date	18/9/2026
Effective Date	18/9/2026
Review Date	18/9/2031
Relevant Legislation	Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2017 *Higher Education Support Act 2003*
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Marketing and Brand Policy
Related Procedures	Assessment of Special Circumstances Procedure

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	Cotutelle PhD Program Procedure Higher Degree by Research Student Admissions and Enrolments Procedure Higher Degree by Research Student Progress Procedure Research Training Program Scholarship Procedure Student Grievance Resolution Procedure Website Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	
Definitions	**Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary**
	Academic Merit Academic Merit is based on an Applicant's level of academic achievement during their prior studies. It is generally assessed on an applicant's OP score, International Baccalaureate (IB) score, Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank, or equivalent rank based on the applicants qualifications and/or work experience. Admission The process of submission and assessment of applications for entry to study at the University. Appeal A formal, written request made by a Student or Employee to a higher authority to have a Decision overturned. Applicant A person who applies for any program or Course of study offered by the University whether the application is made through the Queensland Tertiary Admission Centre (QTAC) or directly to the University. Conflict of Interest If a University Member has an interest that conflicts or may conflict with the discharge of the University Member's duties the University Member should Declare the nature of the interest and the conflict to

the University Member's Supervisor as soon as practicable after the relevant facts come to the University Member's knowledge and must not take action or further action relating to a matter that is or may be affected by the conflict until authorised. An Executive Leader may direct a University Member to resolve a conflict or possible conflict between an interest of the University Member and the University Member's duties. A reference to an interest or to a Conflict of Interest is a reference to those matters within their ordinary meaning under the general law, and, in relation to an interest, the definition in the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, Schedule 1, does not apply. A Conflict of Interest will arise when a University Member's Private Interests conflict with their duty to the University or to serve the public interest as a University Member. The risk of having a conflict of interest increases where a University Member's responsibilities include the authority to make decisions. A conflict of interest may be potential, perceived or actual - when a University Member is in a role where future decision making may be influenced by their Private Interests if a certain condition is fulfilled, they have a potential conflict of interest; a perceived conflict of interest arises where it appears that decisions a University Member make in the course of their University employment may be influenced by their Private Interests, whether or not this is in fact the case; an actual conflict of interest exists where a University Member's actions could be unduly, improperly or excessively influenced by their Private Interests. Serious misconduct can occur when a conflict of interest is concealed, understated, mismanaged or abused.

Cotutelle

A doctoral degree program undertaken jointly at UniSQ and an international higher education institution, where a single thesis is submitted for independent examination by both universities. Student receives two testamurs (degree certificates) confirming that the degree is awarded under a cotutelle agreement.

Decision

A determination made by an Employee, contractor or other authorised delegate in the course of their duties on behalf of the University.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research)

The person bearing that title including a person acting in that position.

Enrolment

The process of admitting Students to one or more Courses for the current Academic Year.

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Family and Domestic Violence

Family and Domestic Violence means violent, threatening or other abusive behaviour by certain individuals known to an Employee that both seeks to coerce or control the Employee, and causes them harm or fear.

Fees Offset

An RTP Fees Offset pays for the tuition fees of a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) student that would otherwise have been paid by the student.

Final Grade

A Final Grade is a code that normally represents the outcome of the Assessment of a Student's performance against the learning objectives of a Course but may reflect the outcome of an applicable administrative process.

Full-Time Study

A Student will be deemed to be in Full-time Study where they are enrolled in at least 75% of the equivalent full-time load (8 Units) during an Academic Year. These Units can be taken in any Study Period during the year.

Higher Degree by Research (HDR)

A Research Doctorate or Research Masters program for which at least two-thirds of the Student load for the program is required as research work.

International Student

A Student who is not an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen, an Australian Permanent Resident or the holder of an Australian permanent humanitarian visa.

Leave of Absence

An approval granted to a Student to cease formal study as an enrolled Student for a specified period of time.

Principal Investigator

The lead Researcher for a Research project. The Principal Investigator may also be referred to as the chief, lead or principal

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Researcher or investigator.

Research

Research is the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include the synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

Research Output

An output is an outcome of research and can take many forms. Research Outputs must meet the definition of Research.

Research Training

A formal course of postgraduate study that leads to the acquisition of advanced skills, techniques and knowledge in the conduct of Research, and requires the production of a substantial original Research Output.

Scholarship

A Scholarship is Student recognition, typically based on Academic Merit, which provides a financial grant to a Student to undertake or complete a program of study at the University over a nominated period of time, in accordance with the selection criteria. A Scholarship may take the form of periodic payments to the Student or a reduction in specified costs, such as tuition fees for the duration of the Scholarship.

Special Circumstances

Matters which are, in most cases, beyond the control of the Student and which will impact their capacity to progress with their planned program of study or meet a submission deadline. In some legislation, Special Circumstances are referred to as “compassionate and compelling circumstances”.

Stipend

Stipend is a fixed regular sum paid as a salary or allowance. This usually applies to Students studying with a Scholarship or Award.

Student

A person who is enrolled in a UniSQ Upskill Course or who is

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	admitted to an Award Program or Non-Award Program offered by the University and is: currently enrolled in one or more Courses or study units; or not currently enrolled but is on an approved Leave of Absence or whose admission has not been cancelled. Suspension Prohibition from enrolling in a Course or program for a specified period due to misconduct. Thesis Also known as a Standard Thesis, is the material outcomes of a program of research. It is also referred to as a 'dissertation'. Tuition Fees Fees charged to non-Commonwealth supported Students for enrolment in a Course. UniSQ uses the term “tuition/direct fees”. University The term 'University' or 'UniSQ' means the University of Southern Queensland. University Business Days The days of Monday to Friday inclusive between 9am and 5pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST), with the exclusion of gazetted Public Holidays for the relevant campus location, plus the closure of the University between 25 December and 1 January in the following year inclusive as specified in the Enterprise Agreement, as well as any closure of the University either at one or several campuses in accordance with a direction of the Crisis Management Team.
	Definitions that relate to this procedure only
Keywords	
Record No	21/720PL

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