Summary

This document outlines the 2014 Conditions of Award for the Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship (MQRES) Scheme. It is consistent with requirements of the 2009-2011 Research Strategic Plan and the Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship (MQRES) Scheme 2014.

These Conditions of Award outline eligibility requirements, entitlements and other requirements for the award and retention of a MQRES scholarship. These conditions apply only to PhD candidates awarded a MQRES who commence at Macquarie in 2014. This scholarship is not transferable to any other institution.

Details

1. Eligibility
The MQRES has three components – a living allowance (stipend), tuition fee support and other allowances. The letter of offer to the successful scholarship applicant will specify the individual availability of each component, and is based on applicant eligibility and scholarship availability.

To hold an award a person must:

   a) be eligible for admission to Macquarie University’s Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program. Admission to the PhD program in 2014 is dependent upon the successful completion of the Master of Research degree, achieving in Year 2 an overall average SNG (Single Numerical Grade) of 85, or equivalent.

   b) be enrolled as a candidate for a Doctor of Philosophy degree at Macquarie University (unless awarded a Macquarie University Indigenous Award)

   c) be enrolled on a full-time attendance basis, unless special approval has been granted for receipt of a part-time award

   d) if an international candidate, be in attendance on campus, unless otherwise specified in, for example, a joint doctoral supervision agreement (cotutelle), or varied by approval of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

   e) not be in receipt of another award, scholarship or salary considered to be equivalent to or to duplicate the purpose and benefits of the scholarship. An equivalent award is defined as an amount of money which is greater than 75% of the basic stipend rate.

   f) not have already completed a research degree or equivalent qualification at the same level

   g) not provide false or misleading information to the University. Where there is reason to believe this condition has not been upheld, the University reserves the right to reassess the student's entitlement to the award.

2. Award duration
The scholarship duration is a maximum period of 3 years full-time, or the equivalent part time. Periods of full time and/or part time study already undertaken towards the degree or undertaken during a suspension of scholarship is called advanced standing, and will be deducted from the tenure of the award (refer to section 5.4). The successful applicant will be advised of their scholarship in their letter of offer.
2.1 Duration of award for cotutelle or joint award degree scholarship holders
The duration of the award for cotutelle or joint award degree scholarship holders will be as stated in the cotutelle or joint award degree supervision agreement. If the duration of award in the agreement is different from the duration in these conditions, the agreement overrides the conditions.

3. Scholarship components
Direct payments relating to scholarship components will be made following candidature commencement, subject to completing the appropriate forms and supplying appropriate supporting paperwork where required.

3.1 Living allowance (stipend)
   a) The living allowance (stipend rate) in 2014 for full-time award holders is $25,392 tax exempt. The living allowance (stipend rate) in 2014 for part-time award holders is $12,696 taxable. The rate of stipend will not be reduced during the tenure of the award unless the award holder changes from full-time to part-time candidature.
   b) The living allowance (stipend) for co-funded scholarships may vary as approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).
   c) The living allowance is paid fortnightly in arrears and will not commence prior to the commencement of enrolment for new awardees. For currently enrolled candidates, the earliest the payment may commence is from the beginning of the enrolment period in which the award was offered subject to scholarship eligibility requirements being met.
   d) Cotutelle and joint degree candidates will be paid the living stipend only when they are on-campus in Australia, unless the cotutelle agreement states otherwise.
   e) The stipend for the full-time award is currently tax exempt under Section 51-10 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. This tax exemption status is determined by the Australian Government and no guarantee can be given by the University on this matter. It is the responsibility of individual award holders to seek their own taxation advice.

3.2 Tuition fee support
   a) For international candidates, the University will provide tuition fee support for the approved program for the scholarship duration, unless otherwise specified in the letter of offer. International candidates who have not submitted their thesis by the end of the scholarship will be required to pay the program tuition fee applicable at the time of scholarship expiry. Fees are payable from the scholarship end date until the date of thesis submission.
   b) All domestic scholarship holders are provided with a sponsored place annually under the Research Training Scheme (RTS) and are not required to pay tuition fees.

3.3 Airfare allowance and travel arrangements
Some students, including cotutelle or joint degree candidates, may have an airfare allowance as part of their agreement. Any such allowance must be specified in the candidate’s offer letter and/or cotutelle or joint agreement. Airfares are booked via Macquarie University by the Higher Degree Research Office (HDRO) in accordance with the Macquarie University Travel Policy.

4. Research off campus
Scholarship holders may undertake research for the degree at locations away from Macquarie University as follows:

4.1 Offsite research (OSR)
   a) The Higher Degree Research Committee or delegate may approve candidates conducting up to 12 months of their research outside Australia while under scholarship. Approval will only be granted if this research is essential for completion of the degree. The scholarship holder must remain enrolled and adequate supervision must be in place and approved by the Faculty Associate Dean Higher Degree Research. The required Ethics approval from Macquarie University for any research conducted offsite, including overseas, must be obtained prior to the OSR.
b) Scholarship holders are required to complete an OSR application form and have approval to undertake offsite research prior to their departure. Without this approval in place, the student’s access to the University insurance cover may be adversely affected.

c) Failure to resume study at the University on the date specified for return after a period of paid OSR will result in the scholarship being suspended.

d) Unless otherwise specified in the agreement, cotutelle and joint degree scholarship holders will not be paid a living stipend when undertaking research at the overseas partner institution.

4.2 Research at other organisations

a) The University may approve a candidate conducting research at organisations outside the higher education system, provided that in such cases, the University is assured that the student has adequate support, supervision, training and research freedom. The rights to intellectual property should be resolved prior to commencement at the organisation. The required Ethics approval from Macquarie University must be obtained prior to conducting this research.

b) International scholarship holders must be enrolled full-time and in attendance on campus, unless otherwise specified in, for example, a Joint Doctoral Supervision Agreement (Cotutelle), or varied by approval of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

5. Enrolment variations

5.1 Changes to enrolment
Any transfers between faculties and departments or changes to the supervisory panel for 2014 scholarship holders may require special approval by the University. A case for such transfers should accompany the transfer documentation.

5.2 Part-time enrolment
Scholarships for part-time enrolment will be granted only in circumstances where a candidate is unable to study full-time due to compelling reasons, such as documented evidence of significant carer responsibilities or a medical condition. A part-time scholarship will not be granted for reasons related to paid employment. International candidate requests are subject to visa restrictions. The University may also require part-time scholarship holders to convert to full-time if previously approved reasons no longer apply.

5.3 Leave of absence and suspension of scholarship
LOA/SOA may not be taken within the first 12 months of candidature unless there are exceptional circumstances.

A scholarship holder who applies for Leave of Absence (LOA) and Suspension of Award (SOA) during the tenure of their scholarship will not be entitled to receive any benefits from their scholarship while their scholarship is suspended.

A scholarship holder may apply for a combination of paid leave (if eligible) and unpaid suspension of award while on approved Leave of Absence. Refer to Section 6 for information about leave entitlements.

5.4 Advanced standing
Advanced standing refers to periods of enrolment undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the scholarship or during periods of suspension of award. If a scholarship holder remains enrolled in his/her program of studies (either full-time or part-time), or enrols in another course of study, during an approved Suspension of Award (SOA), this period of study will be considered to be advanced standing. Accordingly, any remaining tenure of scholarship will be reduced by that period of study undertaken during the suspension upon resumption of the scholarship (ie.the scholarship will not be extended to compensate for the period of study during suspension)

6. Scholarship leave entitlements

6.1. Recreation leave
A scholarship holder undertaking a research program is entitled to 20 days paid recreation leave for each year of full-time study calculated on a pro-rata basis, subject to the following
6.2 Sick leave
Scholarship holders are entitled to receive up to 10 working days paid sick leave each year of the scholarship. A scholarship holder may be granted additional paid sick leave for up to a maximum of twelve weeks during the duration of the MQRES under the following longer term conditions.

a) For the first eight (8) weeks of illness benefits are to continue provided that the scholarship holder notifies the Higher Degree Research Office of the illness within fourteen days (unless prevented from doing so by circumstances beyond his or her control). A medical certificate must be provided.

b) After the first eight (8) weeks of illness benefits shall continue only where the scholarship holder produces another medical certificate to confirm the inability to resume studies.

c) The scholarship may be extended up to a maximum of 12 weeks to compensate for periods of paid sick leave in excess of 10 days. An extension of scholarship will not be granted to compensate for periods of sick leave less than eleven days.

d) Scholarship holders who discontinue enrolment or suspend their scholarship because of illness shall not be entitled to receive any benefits from the scholarship effective from the date of discontinuation or suspension.

e) Where tenure has been held for less than 6 months, benefits will normally be paid on a pro rata basis of 1 week for each month of tenure. For example, a student who has held a scholarship for 4 months is entitled to a maximum of 4 weeks paid sick leave. Periods of paid sick leave may not count towards the 6 months of tenure required for full benefits.

f) Sick leave entitlements may also be extended to cover scholarship holders who are primary care givers with family responsibilities required to care for sick dependents.

6.3 Maternity leave

a) The scholarship holder may be granted a maximum of 12 weeks paid maternity leave provided that they have completed at least 52 weeks of continuous full time study (or equivalent part-time study) while on the scholarship before commencing the leave. The application must be accompanied by a medical certificate from a medical practitioner stating the expected date of birth of the child.

b) Leave of absence from scholarship and candidature may be taken for the period following the approved maternity leave.

c) The maximum duration of the scholarship will be extended by that length of time spent by the scholarship holder on approved maternity leave.

d) The equivalent maternity leave provision may be made available at the time of adoption of a child, and supported by appropriate documentation.

6.4 Parenting leave

a) Scholarship holders who have completed at least 52 weeks of continuous full time study (or equivalent part-time study) while on the scholarship and are partners of women giving birth during the duration of the MQRES, may be entitled to a period of one week of paid parenting leave at the time of the birth. The application must be accompanied by a medical certificate from a medical practitioner stating the expected date of birth of the child.

b) The period of paid parenting leave is added to the scholarship tenure.

c) The equivalent parenting leave provision may be available for the adoption of a child.

7. Employment
The University recommends paid employment should take up no more than 14 hours per week on
average throughout the year (728 hours per scholarship year). Scholarship holders must discuss their intended part-time employment with their supervisor and seek agreement on the appropriate amount of time they may spend in employment without affecting their study. This may be less than the University’s recommended rate. The undertaking of teaching or academic work or other form of employment shall not be regarded as an obligation under the conditions of the scholarship.

Scholarship holders who are employed full-time, or for more than the number of hours recommended above, may be required to relinquish their scholarship.

8. Retention of scholarship
Continuation of the scholarship is subject to satisfactory academic progress and compliance with the scholarship conditions.

9. Completion of scholarship
A scholarship will normally be terminated at the end of the fortnightly pay period following the one in which the candidate's thesis is accepted for submission to the examiners, or on the expiry date of the scholarship, whichever is earlier.

10. Obligations of the scholarship holder
   a) A scholarship holder who is unable to pursue their degree, other than while on approved leave, must notify the Higher Degree Research Office so the scholarship can be terminated.

   b) Scholarship holders are required to repay to the University any allowances or stipend overpaid, whether through the candidates failure to comply with the conditions governing the scholarship or from any other cause.

   c) While the scholarship holder may be free to publish any results arising from research completed while on scholarship, any publications must acknowledge that the work was done while holding the scholarship.

11. Review process
Candidates may request the Higher Degree Research Committee to review decisions affecting their scholarship in relation to the implementation of scholarship conditions.

Candidates wishing to request a review should submit the request to the Director, Higher Degree Research Office, within four weeks of the date of the original decision as advised to the applicant.

12. The University
The University reserves the right to amend these Conditions of Scholarship for commencing scholarship holders.

Related Plans/Resources/Documents

Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship (MQRES) Scheme 2014
Approved Partner Universities: http://www.international.mq.edu.au/research/partner

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