Summary

This document outlines the 2016 Conditions of Award for the Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship (MQRES) Scheme. It is consistent with requirements of the Macquarie University future strategic direction and the Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship (MQRES) Scheme 2016.

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 their PhD at Macquarie in 2016. Master of Research/MQRES bundle scholarship holders should refer to the Master of Research RTP schedule and conditions of award governing the Master of Research component of their program.

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
b) be enrolled as a candidate for a Doctor of Philosophy degree at Macquarie University.
c) be enrolled on a full-time attendance basis on campus, 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 tenure 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 2016 for full-time award holders is $26,288 tax exempt. The living allowance (stipend rate) in 2016 for part-time award holders is $13,144 taxable. The rate is indexed annually. The rate of stipend will not be reduced during the tenure of the award unless the award holder is approved to change from full-time to part-time candidature and a part time scholarship is approved.

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 currently set out in the letter of offer and does not pre-date the date of offer 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 currently not required to pay tuition fees. The RTS guidelines require that you submit your thesis within the RTS funded period – three years full time study (or part-time equivalent) under a PhD and two years full-time (or part time equivalent) for a Master of Philosophy. If you are transferring from another Australian university or have an incomplete research degree you will have your prior study period in the research degree deducted from the maximum candidature at Macquarie.

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 away from the Macquarie University campus 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 their agreement, Cotutelle and joint degree scholarship holders will not be paid a living stipend when undertaking research at the overseas partner institution unless specified in their individual agreement.

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 2016 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)
LOA/SOA may not be taken within the first 12 months of candidature unless there are exceptional circumstances. Refer to the Leave of Absence/Suspension of Award Form and Guidelines.

A scholarship holder who applies for Leave of Absence (LOA) from candidature 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 from candidature. 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 scholarship tenure
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 – (Annual Leave)
A scholarship holder undertaking a research program is entitled to 4 weeks (20 working days) paid recreational leave for each year of full-time study calculated on a pro-rata basis, subject to the following conditions:

a) No more than 4 weeks (20 working days) recreational leave may be accumulated and leave must be taken during the prescribed period of tenure of the scholarship.

b) Recreational leave is presumed to be used in the December/January period of each year of tenure.

c) If recreational leave is taken at any other time than the December/January period, the supervisor’s agreement must be obtained before that leave is taken and a Scholarship Leave Request Form completed and forwarded to the Higher Degree Research Office.

d) Recreational leave does not extend a candidate’s expected work submission date (EWS).

6.2 Sick leave
Scholarship holders are entitled to receive up to 10 working days paid sick leave each year of the scholarship tenure. The scholarship tenure is not extended for periods of sick leave that fall under 10 working days and the candidate is advised to notify their Supervisor and Faculty HDR Manager of this only.

A scholarship holder may also be granted additional paid sick leave for up to a maximum period of 12 weeks (84 calendar days) over the full duration of the MQRES under the following longer term conditions.

a) A maximum period of 12 weeks (84 calendar days) paid sick leave entitlement over the duration of the award is allowable. The scholarship holder must notify 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 which includes specific dates of illness must be provided.

b) Paid Sick Leave provisions are generally taken in conjunction with a period of Leave of Absence from Candidature. Approved LOA will extend a candidate’s expected work submission date (EWS). The minimum period of LOA from candidature is 8 weeks. The medical documentation for an LOA request can be used for the associated scholarship paid sick leave request.

c) If a candidate is sick for a period of time that is greater than 10 working days and less than 8 weeks they can apply for paid sick leave from their scholarship only using the Scholarship Leave Request Form. This will extend the scholarship end date but not the expected work submission date (EWS) and must be supported by a medical certificate.

d) 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.

e) Scholarship holders who withdraw from their enrolled program 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.

f) 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.

g) 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 subject to the approval of the Higher Degree Research Office Director.
6.3 Maternity leave
   a) The scholarship holder may be granted up to a maximum of 12 weeks (84 calendar days) paid maternity leave over the term of the scholarship 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) If the period of Leave of absence from candidature (LOA) is longer than the paid maternity leave provisions allowed for under the Conditions of award then a candidate can apply for a period of suspension of award (SOA) for the period following the approved paid maternity leave. This total combined period of paid maternity leave and suspension of award will be the entire approved period of LOA from candidature.
   c) The maximum duration – end date 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 (5 working days) 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 extends 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 naturally expire on the end date of the award and payments will cease.

International candidates in receipt of a tuition component as part of their award need to be aware that if this scholarship expires part way through an enrolment period EP 1 - 1 January to 30 June or EP2 - 1 July to 31 December then a gap tuition fee will be automatically generated for the period of the enrolment that the scholarship does not cover and shown as a fee debt within the e student portal at the end of their award.

If the thesis is submitted prior to the expiry of the award the 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.
   d) Scholarship holders must be aware of and comply with the University’s research ethics policies and procedures about the gathering and use of data, and comply with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, The Macquarie Code and relevant external and internal ethical guidelines (see http://www.research.mq.edu.au/research_integrity).
   e) The conduct of all Macquarie University research must adhere to The Macquarie Code irrespective of its funding source or whether it requires ethical review.
   f) Failure to adhere to The Macquarie Code or the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007) may be a ground for disciplinary action (see Part B: Resolving Allegations of Breaches or Research Misconduct).
   g) All Macquarie University staff and students have an obligation to report any possible breaches of The Macquarie Code or the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007), or possible research misconduct to the Director, Research Ethics and Integrity. The preparation and presentation of reports should follow The Macquarie Code, and include any advice received from a Research Integrity Advisor, as well as indicating if the individual wishes that their identity is protected. Reports should be made in writing.

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 Strategic Research Framework 2015-2024

Macquarie University Research Integrity
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/research_integrity

Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship (MQRES) Scheme 2016

Cotutelle and Joint PhD Programs:
http://www.hdr.mq.edu.au/information_for/Cotutelle_and_joint_phd_programs
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<th><strong>Contact Officer</strong></th>
<th>Director, Higher Degree Research Office</th>
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<td><strong>Approval Authority</strong></td>
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<td>1 January 2016</td>
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<td><strong>Amendment Dates</strong></td>
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