Research Training Program (RTP) and Macquarie University Research Training Program Scholarship (MQRTP) Conditions of Award 2017

Summary

This document outlines the 2017 Conditions of Award for the Australian Commonwealth Government funded Research Training Program (RTP) scholarships, and Macquarie University Research Training Program Scholarship (MQRTP) Scheme. It is consistent with requirements of the Macquarie University future strategic direction and the Macquarie University Research Training Program Scholarship (MQRTP) Scheme 2017. We fund postgraduate candidates of exceptional research promise and develop researchers with a proven capacity for research.

The Strategic Research Framework 2015 – 2024 is our roadmap by which we deliver World-Leading Research with World-Changing Impact.

100% of Macquarie University’s Research has been evaluated as being world class or above through the 2015 Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) ratings.

These Conditions of Award outline eligibility requirements, entitlements and other requirements for the award and retention of an Australian Commonwealth Government funded RTP scholarship at Macquarie University, and MQRTP scholarships. These conditions apply only to PhD candidates awarded a scholarship who commence their PhD at Macquarie in 2017. Master of Research/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 RTP scholarship and MQRTP have three components – RTP or MQRTP stipend (living allowance), RTP or MQRTP Tuition Fee Offset and may include 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 as an international or domestic candidate;
- b) be enrolled as a candidate for a Doctor of Philosophy degree at Macquarie University;
- c) be enrolled on a full-time, internal attendance basis and onsite, unless special approval has been granted for receipt of a part-time award;
- d) if an international candidate, be in attendance on campus (onsite), 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 receiving income from another source to support the candidate’s general living costs while undertaking their course of study if that income is greater than 75 per cent of the RTP or MQRTP stipend rate. Income unrelated to the student’s course of study or income received for the...
candidate’s course of study but not for the purposes of supporting general living costs is not taken into account.
f) to be eligible for an RTP or MQRTP Fee Offset Scholarship, not be receiving an equivalent award or scholarship from the Commonwealth designed to offset HDR fees;
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. Period of Support
The period of support for an RTP or MQRTP Stipend and/or RTP or MQRTP Tuition Fee Offset for a PhD program is a maximum period of three (3) years full-time, or the equivalent part-time. If an RTP or MQRTP scholarship is offered to an MPhil candidate the maximum period is two (2) 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, are called advanced standing and will be deducted from the tenure of the award (refer to section 5.3). 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 individually packaged and 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 MQRTP Stipend (living allowance)
a) The RTP and MQRTP stipend rates in 2017 for full-time award holders is $26,682 tax exempt. 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) If a candidate is approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) or delegate to enroll on a part-time basis, the part-time RTP or MQRTP Stipend rate will be 50 per cent of the full-time RTP or MQRTP stipend rate.
c) The MQRTP stipend for co-funded scholarships may vary as approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).
d) The RTP or MQRTP Stipend is paid fortnightly in arrears to an Australian bank account 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.
e) Cotutelle and joint award degree candidates will be paid the MQRTP stipend only when they are on-campus in Australia, unless the Cotutelle agreement states otherwise.
f) The RTP or MQRTP 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 RTP and MQRTP Tuition Fee Offset
The University will provide a tuition fee offset for the approved program for the scholarship duration to extinguish the liability of the candidates to pay tuition fees, unless otherwise specified in the letter of offer. Candidates who have not submitted their thesis by the end of the scholarship tenure 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, unless otherwise advised.

3.3 MQRTP Allowances
Some students, including Cotutelle or joint award degree candidates, may have an airfare allowance included as part of their agreement. Any such allowance will be specified in the candidate’s offer letter and/or Cotutelle or joint award agreement. Airfares are booked at Macquarie University by the Higher Degree Research Office (HDRO) in accordance with the Macquarie University Travel Policy. The candidate will be requested to complete a Cotutelle/Joint Degree Airfare Request Form to claim the allowance.

3.4 RTP Allowances
International candidates in receipt of an RTP scholarship (iRTP) may have an allowance included in their offer, to meet the costs of a standard Overseas Student Health Cover 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 Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) 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. 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.
   b) 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.
   c) Unless otherwise specified in their agreement, Cotutelle and joint award 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 candidate 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 (Variations)
Any transfers between faculties and departments or changes to the supervisory panel of the HDR candidate for scholarship holders may require special approval by the University. A case for such transfers should accompany the transfer documentation.

5.2 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.

5.3 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 enrolls 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. RTP and MQRTP Stipend leave entitlements

6.1 Recreation leave – (Annual Leave)
An RTP or MQRTP stipend 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; this leave entitlement may be accrued over the life of the stipend but will be forfeited when the stipend is terminated.

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).

e) Scholarship payments continue during periods of recreational leave.

6.2 Sick leave
RTP or MQRTP stipend holders are entitled to receive up to ten (10) working days paid sick leave each year of the scholarship tenure. The stipend tenure is not extended for periods of sick leave that fall under ten (10) working days and the candidate is advised to notify their Supervisor and Faculty HDR Manager of this only. This leave entitlement may be accrued over the life of the stipend but will be forfeited when the stipend is terminated.

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

a) A maximum period of twelve (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 (14) 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 (EWS) date. The minimum period of LOA from candidature is eight (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 eight (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 and the EWS date and must be supported by a medical certificate.
d) The scholarship may be extended up to a maximum of twelve (12) weeks to compensate for periods of paid sick leave in excess of ten (10) days. An extension of scholarship will not be granted to compensate for periods of sick leave less than eleven (11) 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) Sick leave entitlements may also be extended to cover scholarship holders who are primary caretakers with family responsibilities required to care for sick dependents subject to the approval of the Director, Higher Degree Research Office.

6.3 Maternity leave
a) The RTP or MQRTP Stipend holder may be granted up to a maximum of twelve (12) weeks (84 calendar days) paid maternity leave over the term of the scholarship provided that they have completed at least 12 months of continuous full time study (or equivalent part-time study) while in receipt of the stipend 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) RTP or MQRTP Stipend holders who have completed at least twelve (12) months of continuous full-time study (or equivalent part-time study) while receiving the stipend and are partners of women giving birth, may be entitled to a period of one (1) 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 fourteen (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.

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

9. Termination of the Scholarship
A scholarship will naturally expire on the end date of the award and stipend payments and Tuition Fee Offset will cease.

International candidates in receipt of a Tuition Fee Offset as part of their award need to be aware that if their scholarship expires part way through an Enrolment Period (EP), that being for EP 1 - 1 January to 30 June or EP 2 - 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
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 Management 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 Training Program Scholarship (MQRTP) Scheme 2017

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>28 October 2016</td>
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<td><strong>Approval Authority</strong></td>
<td>Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)</td>
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<td><strong>Date of Commencement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date for Next Review</strong></td>
<td>July 2017</td>
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