Research Training Program for Master of Research (RTP MRES) and Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship Master of Research (MQRES MRES) Conditions of Award 2019

Summary

This document outlines the 2019 Conditions of Award for the Master of Research (MRes) Australian Commonwealth Government Funded Research Training Program (i/RTP MRES) scholarships, and the Master of Research Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship (i/MQRES MRES) Scheme. It is consistent with requirements of the Macquarie University future strategic direction and the Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship (MQRES) Scheme 2019. 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 i/RTP MRES scholarship at Macquarie University, and Macquarie University funded scholarships under the MQRES scheme. These conditions apply to Master of Research candidates who hold a scholarship at Macquarie in 2019. Doctor or Master of Philosophy (PhD or MPhil) scholarship holders should refer to the i/RTP and i/MQRES Conditions of Award governing the program.

This scholarship is not transferable to any other institution.

Details

1. Eligibility

The i/RTP scholarship and i/MQRES have three components – i/RTP or i/MQRES stipend (living allowance), i/RTP or i/MQRES Tuition Fee Offset and may include other allowances. The MRes Research Training Program (i/RTP MRES) scholarships and MRes Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarships (i/MQRES MRES) are subject to funding availability and applicant eligibility. The letter of offer to the successful scholarship applicant will specify details of the awarded scholarship.

To hold an award a person must:

a) be enrolled as a candidate for the Master of Research (MRes) program;

b) not be receiving income from another source to support the candidate in their course of study if that income is greater than 75 per cent of the i/RTP or i/MQRES stipend rate. Income unrelated to the student’s course of study is not considered.

c) not be receiving an equivalent award or scholarship from the Commonwealth designed to offset HDR fees.

d) Not withhold or 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 candidate’s entitlement to the award.

It is the candidate’s responsibility to ensure that they continue to meet the eligibility criteria and conditions for all awards they receive.

The candidate can contact the Higher Degree Research Office directly to discuss any questions pertaining to their individual case and circumstances.
2. Selection of Scholarship Awardees

Scholarships are awarded based on the criteria outlined below to support and ensure excellence in research training skills for candidates enrolled in the Master of Research (MRes) degree.

a) The Higher Degree Research Office is responsible for managing the process for awarding i/RTP MRES and i/MQRES MRES scholarships.
b) Applicants assessed as possessing sufficient merit will be ranked in order of rating by the Faculty Scholarship Selection/Ranking Committee, for scholarships through advertised rounds. This ranking is then reviewed by the University Scholarships Selection Committee (a subcommittee of the Thesis Examinations Subcommittee).
c) The final ranked list of scholarship applicants is reviewed by the Executive Director, Research Training and Research Training Partnerships, and approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).
d) Part-time RTP MRES stipends are available under specific circumstances, on application to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) via the Higher Degree Research Office. Part-time stipends will not be awarded because of candidate’s other employment commitments. Note that this does not apply to candidates enrolled part-time on a tuition-fee offset only.
e) Awardees must be enrolled on a full-time, internal attendance basis and onsite, unless special approval has been granted for receipt of a part-time award by the Executive Director, Higher Degree Research Office.
f) Awardees who are an international candidate, must be in attendance on campus (onsite).
g) Candidates who receive 32 credit points of advanced standing may enter the MRes program in Year 2. These candidates must also meet the standard entry requirements for admission. Eligibility for a Year 2 stipend will be determined through a competitive ranking process.

2.1 Year 1 (MQRES MRES scholarships only)

Full-time\(^1\) enrolled domestic candidates who are awarded an MQRES MRES will be paid a stipend of AUD$4,000 in Session 1. Students who achieve a minimum overall weighted average of 65 at the end of Session 1 may also be eligible for a stipend of AUD$4,000 in Session 2. Enrolment in Session 3 units will not be considered when determining a domestic Year 1 candidate’s eligibility for the stipend payment in Session 2.

If a candidate withdraws from any unit(s) after the census date in either Session 1 or Session 2 in Year 1, and becomes ineligible, the student will not be entitled to receive MQRES MRES scholarship funding for that session. Any payments that have already been made will be regarded as an overpayment and will need to be returned to the University.

Year 1 international candidates will not normally be eligible for an iMQRES MRES scholarship.

2.2 Year 2 (i/RTP MRES and i/MQRES MRES)

Domestic candidates

Year 2 stipend will be determined through a competitive ranking process, based on performance in all Year 1 units. Exempt units will not be counted for calculation of the ‘weighted average’. The final weighted averages of all BPhil candidates will be ranked and only the top ranked candidates will be awarded a Year 2 scholarship.

Candidates enrolling in Session 3 will also be considered provisionally based on their completed units. Eligibility will be dependent on meeting the required scholarship allocation cut-off weighted average.

International candidates

The University offers a limited number of scholarships to international MRes Year 2 candidates through the competitive International Research Training Program Scholarship (IRTP/IMQRES) round each year. This process is for new direct entry international candidates and international MRes Year 1 candidates progressing to Year 2.

Applicants for admission to PhD who are counter-offered entry to MRes Year 2 with a provisional 3-year PhD, and who rank competitively for a scholarship, may be offered a scholarship to offset their MRes Year 2 tuition fees and a living allowance stipend (MRes/PhD bundle offers).

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\(^1\) Full-time enrolment is defined as a minimum of 3 units in each session.
3. Scholarship Components

3.1 i/RTP MRES or i/MQRES MRES Stipend (Living Allowance)

Year 1

The Year 1 MQRES MRES scholarship stipend in 2019 for domestic full-time enrolled scholarship holders is AUD$8,000 per annum tax free. This is paid in two tranches following confirmation of continued full-time enrolment after each sessional census date and of meeting the eligibility requirements set out in Section 2.

Year 2

The Year 2 i/RTP MRES and i/MQRES MRES scholarship stipend in 2018 for full-time enrolled scholarship holders is AUD$27,082 per annum (2018 rate), as per conditions outlined in Section 2. This document will be updated when the 2019 rate is announced by the Department of Education and Training. Year 2 stipend payments will be made fortnightly in arrears from the date of confirmation of enrolment until the end of the year or date of withdrawal, in the case of students withdrawing from the program during the year. If a domestic candidate is approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or delegate to hold a scholarship on a part-time basis due to special consideration, the part-time RTP MRES or MQRES MRES stipend rate will be 50 per cent of the full-time RTP or MQRES stipend rate and taxable.

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 Offset

   a) All domestic scholarship holders in Year 1 of the Bachelor of Philosophy/Master of Research (BPhil/MRes) are provided a Commonwealth Supported Place. Commonwealth supported students are liable to pay a student contribution towards the units they study.

   b) The Australian Government provides a tuition fee offset scholarship for domestic candidates in Year 2 of the program for duration of their candidature. The University may also pay a tuition fee offset to eligible international candidates for the duration of their scholarship to extinguish the liability of these candidates to pay tuition fees, unless otherwise specified in the letter of offer. International 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.

   c) Tenure of award – Tuition Fee Offset

   The tenure of award of tuition fee offsets for international and domestic i/RTP MRES and i/MQRES MRES in Year 2 of the program is from confirmation of enrolment until the end of the year or date of withdrawal (normally 01/01 – 31/12 of the year of enrolment), and will be stated in the letter of offer.

   d) If approved as part of a co-funded scholarship or other agreement, the University may provide full or partial tuition fee offset for selected International candidates in Year 1 and/or Year 2 of the approved program. In such cases, details will be specified in the letter of offer.

   e) iRTP MRES Allowances (International candidates only)

   International candidates in receipt of an iRTP MRES scholarship may have an allowance included in their offer, to meet the costs of a single 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 3 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, changes to the supervisory panel of the HDR candidate for scholarship holders or changes to part-time enrolment require special approval by the University. A case for such transfers or changes should accompany the request documentation.

Stipend holders seeking to change their enrolment from full-time to part-time or vice versa must seek approval from the DVC R on the Change of Program form for MRES candidates. Please note that changing from Full-time to Part-time will usually result in the termination of the scholarship unless special consideration is approved (for example where a student is able to demonstrate significant caring commitments or a Medical condition which limits the capacity to undertake full-time study) (see 3.1 above).

5.2 Leave of absence and suspension of scholarship (LOA/SOA)

Year 1

In the first year, enrolment is based around sessional dates and breaks are scheduled. If performance within study terms has been impacted by a serious and unavoidable disruption (as defined in the Macquarie University Disruption to Studies Policy and Procedure) such that they do not reach their usual demonstrated performance level, students should discuss their situation with their Faculty MRes Advisor and follow the University’s Disruption to Studies procedure.

Year 2

LOA/SOA may be taken for a minimum period of two (2) weeks and a maximum of three (3) months in accordance with the Guidelines for applying for a Leave of Absence which are included on the application form.

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.

6. i/RTP and i/MQRES Stipend leave entitlements

6.1 Recreation leave (Annual Leave)

Stipend holders are entitled to receive up to 20 working days paid recreation leave which is presumed to be used after thesis submission.

Scholarship payments continue during periods of recreational leave.

6.2 Sick Leave
i/RTP MRES or i/MQRES MRES 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 (60 working days) over the full duration of the stipend under the following longer-term conditions. Additional paid sick leave is subject to the following conditions:

a) A maximum period of twelve (12) weeks (60 working 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 (additional) provisions will extend a candidate’s Expected Work Submission (EWS) date.

c) If a candidate is sick for a period that is greater than 10 working days and up to 12 weeks (60 working days), they can apply for paid sick leave using the Scholarship Leave Request form. This will extend the scholarship end date and Candidature EWS date.

d) The scholarship may be extended up to a maximum of twelve (12) weeks (60 working days) to compensate for periods of paid sick leave more than ten (10) working days. An extension of scholarship will not be granted to compensate for periods of sick leave less than eleven (11) working 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 care givers with family responsibilities required to care for sick dependents subject to the approval of the Executive Director, Higher Degree Research Office.

g) Requests submitted within three (3) months of a candidate’s EWS date may not be approved. In these cases, candidates should consider applying for an extension to their EWS date on the MRes Extension Form.

6.3 Maternity leave

The i/RTP MRES or i/MQRES MRES Stipend holder may be granted up to a maximum of twelve (12) weeks (60 working days) paid maternity leave over the term of the scholarship if 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. Applications for paid maternity leave are subject to the following conditions:

a) If a candidate is applying for paid maternity leave for a period up to twelve (12) weeks (60 working days), then can apply for paid maternity leave using the Scholarship Leave Request form. The application must be accompanied by a medical certificate from a medical practitioner stating the expected date of birth of the child. This will extend the scholarship end date and Candidature EWS date.

b) If the period of leave 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. The application will need to be submitted using a Leave of Absence from candidature (LOA) and Suspension of Award (SOA) request form. The request will be for a Leave of Absence from candidature in conjunction with paid Maternity Leave (maximum entitlement 12 weeks or 60 working days) followed by a Suspension of Award (SOA). This total combined period of paid maternity leave and suspension of award will match the entire approved period of LOA from candidature.

c) The period of paid maternity leave extends the scholarship tenure, end date and Candidature EWS date.

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 Parental leave

i/RTP MRES or i/MQRES MRES 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. Applications for paid parental leave are subject to the following conditions:

a) If a candidate is applying for paid parental leave for a period up to one (1) week (5 working days), they can apply using the Scholarship Leave Request Form. 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 parental leave extends the scholarship tenure, end date, and Candidature EWS date.

c) The equivalent parental leave provision may be made available at the time of adoption of a child, and support by appropriate documentation.

7. Employment

In Year 2, the University advises that paid employment should take up no more than 728 hours per scholarship year, this equates to approximately fourteen (14) hours per week on average throughout the scholarship year. Scholarship holders must discuss their intended part-time employment with their MRes Advisors and 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 any other form of employment shall not be regarded as an obligation under the conditions of the scholarship. International students must check their individual visa requirements.

8. Retention of scholarship

Continuation of the scholarship is subject to continued enrolment in the MRes program, 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. This amount will be shown as a fee debt within the e-student portal at the end of their award in the EP that the scholarship expires.

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 in which the candidate’s thesis is accepted for submission to the examiners, or on the expiry date of the scholarship, whichever is earlier.

i/RTP MRES and i/MQRES MRES scholarships will be terminated when the scholarship holder ceases to be eligible for the award or does not comply with one or more of the obligations below.

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 candidate’s 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 these scholarship Conditions of Award.

Candidates wishing to request a review should submit the request to the Executive Director, HDRO within four (4) 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 Award for commencing and continuing scholarship holders.

Related Plans/Resources/Documents

Macquarie University Strategic Research Framework 2015-2024
Macquarie University Research Integrity
Macquarie University Research Training Program Scholarship (MQRES) Scheme 2018
Macquarie University Disruption to Studies Policy
Macquarie University Disruption to Studies Procedure

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