

# Graduate Research and RTP Scholarships Policy

## Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) This Policy outlines the principles and procedures under which La Trobe University offers higher degree by research scholarships ('scholarships') to candidates enrolled in higher degrees by research ('candidates').

## Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to:

- a. scholarships funded wholly by the University, including but not limited to:
  - i. La Trobe University Graduate Research Scholarship
  - ii. La Trobe University Full-Fee Research Scholarship
  - iii. David Myers Research Scholarship
  - iv. La Trobe University Research Equity Scholarship
  - v. The Dennis McDermott Research Scholarship
  - vi. La Trobe University Flexible Research Scholarships
- b. scholarships funded by the Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP):
  - i. RTP Fees Offset Scholarship
  - ii. RTP Stipend
  - iii. RTP Allowance
- c. scholarships funded by industry, philanthropic or other external organisations, wholly or in part with the University, except where 3(a) applies.

(3) This Policy does not apply to:

- a. externally funded scholarships where payments only are administered by the University but the terms and conditions of the scholarship are defined by the sponsor
- b. scholarships and prizes wholly administered by organisations external to the University or
- c. other payments made to candidates funded by the University except where 2(a) and 2(c) apply.

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

(4) La Trobe University will offer scholarships consistent with the requirements of the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 - Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#) to eligible candidates of exceptional research potential to undertake higher degrees by research.

(5) Candidates may be awarded more than one scholarship consistent with the provisions in Part C (Eligibility for Scholarships) of this Policy. Scholarships may include provision for tuition fees, fee offsets, living stipends and

targeted allowances that may be awarded separately. Some scholarships provide additional living allowances and project support to outstanding applicants.

(6) Scholarships will be offered on the basis of merit and according to the University's strategic and equity priorities.

(7) Ranking and selection of candidates will be based on clear, consistent and published criteria (see [Graduate Research and RTP Scholarships - Schedule B - Ranking and Selection Process](#)) and undertaken by university staff with appropriate knowledge, skills and training.

(8) The Board of Graduate Research is responsible for determining annually the value and duration of all scholarship awards.

(9) The Board of Graduate Research is responsible for the final allocation of scholarships across the University and any decisions concerning the extension or cessation of individual awards. The Board will be fair and equitable in the use of its discretionary powers in relation to scholarships.

(10) The Graduate Research School is responsible for the administration of all graduate research scholarships together with other parts of the University that are responsible for research contracts and payroll.

## Section 4 - Procedures

### Part A - Types of Scholarship

#### Fee Scholarships

(11) The University administers two main types of fee scholarships:

- a. RTP Fees Offset Scholarships are paid directly to the University by the Australian Government on behalf of the holder to partially offset costs to the University for tuition and support of the studies undertaken by the Research Training Program scholarship holder. At La Trobe University RTP Fees Offset Scholarships are offered to domestic candidates only.
- b. La Trobe University Full-Fee Research Scholarships pay the tuition fees for international candidates, and may also be awarded in some circumstances to domestic candidates whose eligibility for an RTP Fees Offset Scholarship has expired.

#### Stipend Scholarships

(12) Stipend scholarships are provided to both domestic and international candidates to support the general living costs of the holder.

(13) Stipends will be paid on a fortnightly basis by the University directly into a bank account in the name of the stipend holder.

(14) Stipend scholarships will be awarded to both candidates enrolled in Masters by research and doctoral degrees. In addition to the eligibility requirements and terms and conditions of each scholarship, the application, ranking, selection and offer of scholarships may vary according to the type of degree in which the candidate will be enrolled.

#### Allowances

(15) Allowances may be paid to stipend holders to support costs associated with the production of publications, including research theses and other examinable artefacts, and relocation to undertake the degree. The value and conditions associated with allowances will be outlined in a candidate's letter of offer.

## Part B - Scholarship Terms and Conditions

(16) All scholarship holders must adhere to the scholarship conditions as set out in [Graduate Research and RTP Scholarships - Schedule A - Terms and Conditions](#) as may be amended from time to time.

(17) The Board of Graduate Research is responsible for setting terms and conditions for the following schemes (including but not limited to):

- a. scholarships funded wholly by the University
- b. scholarships funded by the Australian Government Research Training Program
- c. scholarships funded by industry, philanthropic or other external organisations, wholly or in part with the University, except where 3(a) applies.

(18) The broad terms and conditions – including stipend and fee offset rates - for all scholarship schemes administered by the Board of Graduate Research are outlined in [Graduate Research and RTP Scholarships - Schedule A - Terms and Conditions](#) linked to this Policy. These will be reviewed annually, provided to successful applicants and must be agreed to by the applicant in accepting the scholarship.

(19) Terms and conditions for scholarships under 2(c) may include additional provisions or variations to the provisions outlined in [Graduate Research and RTP Scholarships - Schedule A - Terms and Conditions](#) relating to industry, professional practice or other activities determined by the external funding body. These will be provided to successful applicants and must be agreed to by the applicant in accepting the scholarship.

(20) Terms and conditions for scholarships under 3(a) which are administered by the University will be determined by the funding body, provided to successful applicants and must be agreed to by the applicant in accepting the scholarship.

### Period of Support

(21) A candidate's maximum period of support is based on the date the candidate commenced their graduate research degree. The commencement date for candidates who transfer from one graduate research degree to another will be the date of the first research degree in which they enrolled.

(22) The full-time periods of support for an RTP Fees Offset Scholarship or La Trobe University Full-Fee Research Scholarship are:

- a. a maximum of four years for a research doctorate
- b. a maximum of two years for a Masters by research.

(23) The University will normally charge candidates up to the equivalent current value of the fees offset amount (for domestic candidates) or tuition fee (for international candidates) for any periods of candidature beyond the maximum period of support. The provision of tuition fee scholarships to candidates enrolled beyond the maximum periods of support outlined in clause 22 will be considered by the Board of Graduate Research upon request only under exceptional circumstances.

(24) The maximum full-time periods of support for a stipend scholarship are:

- a. three years and six months for a Doctoral degree
- b. 22 months for a Masters by research degree.

(25) These timeframes include the provision of a stipend extension in the event that a candidate's progress is delayed and they are approved for a postponement of their expected work submission date as per the [Graduate Research](#)

[Progress Policy](#).

(26) RTP Fees Offset Scholarships can be held on a part-time basis. Stipend scholarships may be made available to candidates who are enrolled part-time only with the approval of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate and Global Research), under specific conditions outlined in [Graduate Research and RTP Scholarships - Schedule A - Terms and Conditions](#). For part-time load, periods of support are doubled.

(27) All stipend and fee scholarships will be terminated upon thesis submission.

## **Arrangements for Continuing Candidates**

(28) Any continuing candidate who received support under the Research Training Scheme prior to 2017, or who received an offer under this scheme but will not commence until 2017, will receive equivalent support under the schemes funded by the Research Training Program. This includes Australian Postgraduate Award and International Postgraduate Research Scholarship holders.

## **Part C - Eligibility for Scholarships**

### **Eligibility to Take up a Fees Scholarship**

(29) Applicants must:

- a. be enrolled in a Masters by research or doctoral degree at this University
- b. not be receiving an equivalent award or scholarship from the Commonwealth designed to offset HDR fees.

(30) La Trobe University Full-Fee Research Scholarships will normally only be awarded concurrently with a stipend scholarship.

### **Eligibility to Take up a Stipend or Allowance**

(31) To be eligible to take up a stipend scholarship or allowance at La Trobe University a person additionally must not be receiving equivalent support providing a benefit greater than 75 per cent of the stipend rate, excluding income unrelated to the course of study or income received for the course of study but not for the purposes of supporting general living costs.

### **Research Equity Scholarships**

(32) In addition to the criteria above, applicants for La Trobe University Research Equity Scholarships must make a 500 word submission outlining the socio-economic or other relevant factors that have hindered their studies.

### **Currently Enrolled Candidates**

(33) Currently enrolled domestic and international candidates may apply for a stipend or fees scholarship. Any candidature time already consumed will be deducted from the duration of any scholarship awarded.

## **Part D - Application, Selection and Offer of Scholarships**

### **Application**

(34) Candidates seeking to apply for a scholarship must follow the instructions on the [Graduate Research School website](#).

(35) Applicants for all scholarships must formally apply for candidature and scholarships simultaneously unless already

enrolled at the University when they are applying for a scholarship.

(36) The Graduate Research School may advertise opening and closing dates for scholarship applications on its website, which may differ according to residency and the degree which the scholarship will support. Applications received at other times will be considered on a case-by-case basis either as a bridging scholarship or where the application has been made for a specific scholarship program with a different advertised closing date. Any applications made at other times that are deemed unsuccessful will be considered during the next end-of-year round only at the request of the applicant.

## **Selection**

(37) All scholarships are awarded to applicants with research experience based on merit of applications and consideration of targeted areas of research strength at the University, including commitments to new academic appointments and partnerships, and awarded competitive grants.

(38) Masters by research scholarship applications will be assessed and ranked independently of applications for a doctoral scholarship.

(39) All eligible applicants for a Masters by research scholarship are allocated a score equivalent to a La Trobe University honours grade on the basis of their performance in their qualifying degree/s and then placed in a ranked list of applicants for the available scholarship/s, and prioritised as per the criteria in [Graduate Research and RTP Scholarships - Schedule B - Ranking and Selection Process](#).

(40) All eligible applicants for a doctoral scholarship are allocated a score equivalent to a La Trobe University Masters by research grade on the basis of their prior qualifications and research experience and then placed in a ranked list of applicants for the available scholarship/s, and prioritised as per the criteria in [Graduate Research and RTP Scholarships - Schedule B - Ranking and Selection Process](#).

## **Ranking of Scholarship Applicants**

(41) Schools will rank applications received for Masters by research and doctoral scholarships as separate cohorts.

(42) Schools will nominate a minimum of 30% of their allocated scholarships for both cohorts to the top-ranked applicants across all research areas within the school. The remaining ranked applicants will be nominated on merit to scholarships allocated to target areas of research within the school.

(43) Scholarships advertised for specific projects, including those allocated centrally as commitments to new academic appointments and partnerships, and awarded competitive grants, will be nominated on merit, which includes the relevance of applicant's qualifications and experience to the specific research project or theme.

(44) After school ranking is complete the Board of Graduate Research will determine which school-ranked applicants both for Masters by research and doctoral scholarships will receive the relevant award.

(45) All offers of candidature will be accompanied by an offer of an RTP Fees Offset Scholarship (domestic candidates) independently of whether they are also to receive a stipend under any other scholarship scheme.

## **Offers**

(46) All scholarship offers are conditional on a successful offer of candidature for the relevant award. Offers of candidature may be conditional on meeting certain provisions such as [English language requirements](#), confirmation of honours or Masters by research result, and receipt of original documentation.

(47) The scholarship holder will commence studies within such period as La Trobe University will allow. Normally the scholarship will commence on the commencement date specified in the original scholarship offer letter; any extension

beyond this date, arising from exceptional circumstances, must be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate and Global Research).

(48) The University may stipulate and advertise a specified period within which the scholarship holder must commence studies. Deferral of the scholarship beyond this specified period will normally not be permitted.

(49) The University reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a scholarship if an applicant does not reply to the offer by the date specified or does not commence studies by the allowed date.

(50) Applicants who have been unsuccessful in their application for a scholarship will be notified in writing following the conclusion of the round. Applicants who have been unsuccessful in one round may apply in subsequent rounds.

## **Part E - Supervision and Resources**

(51) Applications will only be considered where appropriate supervision and resources are available to support the proposed research project.

(52) All candidates offered candidature and/or a scholarship at La Trobe University will be:

- a. allocated a minimum of two supervisors throughout their candidature and a progress committee to support their research according to the conditions outlined in the [Graduate Research Supervision Policy](#) and other relevant candidature and progress policies
- b. provided with appropriate facilities and resources to undertake their research projects in accordance with the [Graduate Research Support Policy](#).

## **Part F - Right of Review**

(53) Appeals will be considered only in relation to the application of this policy, procedure and associated schedules.

(54) Candidates wishing to appeal a decision in relation to a scholarship must do so in writing to the Board of Graduate Research within 20 working days of the date of the written notice of the decision.

(55) In any appeal members of the Board who were not involved in the original decision will consider the appeal.

(56) Scholarship applicants or holders not satisfied with the outcome of any review may seek a review from the University Ombudsman.

(57) Where a scholarship is awarded as a result of a successful appeal and the appeal finds that the original decision not to award was made in error as a consequence of the consideration of the application by the academic school then the school will be responsible for funding any awarded stipend until the commencement of the following academic year.

## **Part G - Acknowledgement of Scholarships**

(58) Candidates holding an RTP Fees Offset Scholarship, RTP Stipend or RTP Allowance are required to acknowledge the Commonwealth's contribution of an RTP Scholarship in any published materials related to the higher degree by research. This relates to any time, both during and after completion of the higher degree by research, and includes items such as books, articles, newsletters or other literary or artistic works. The RTP scholarship holder must acknowledge receipt of this support using the exact phrase:

This work was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

## Section 5 - Definitions

(59) Nil.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
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