



# 2025 First Nations Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarships Terms and Conditions of Award

## 1. Introduction

These terms and conditions apply to domestic Indigenous students who have been awarded Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarships and whom will be commencing a higher degree by research at Deakin University in 2025. Any additional conditions relating to the granting of an Award, such as the obligation to comply with the conditions of an external grant, will be set out in the Letter of Offer of Candidature and Scholarship.

## 2. Eligibility

To be eligible for the scholarship a person must be:

- a domestic Indigenous student enrolled in a higher degree by research course of study at Deakin University.
- a member of the “Aboriginal race” of Australia or a descendant of an Indigenous inhabitant of the Torres Strait Islands.

For the avoidance of doubt this means a person:

- is of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent; and
- identifies as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; and
- is accepted as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the Indigenous Australian community in which they live or have lived.

A student must not be receiving income from another source to support that student’s general living costs while undertaking their course of study if that income is greater than 75 per cent of that student’s RTP Stipend rate. Income unrelated to the student’s course of study or income received for the student’s course of study but not for the purposes of supporting general living costs is not to be taken into account.

## 3. Acceptance and Enrolment

A student receiving a RTP Scholarship will be enrolled as an on-campus full-time student. Part-time enrolment may be approved at the discretion of the University where an applicant is able to demonstrate significant carer commitments or a medical condition that precludes them from enrolling full-time. Off-campus enrolment may be approved where the research of the student requires it. Part-time and off-campus enrolment must be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Researcher Development.

Awardees are required to commence study within three months of offer of the Award, and to complete enrolment requirements by the date prescribed in the Letter of Offer of Candidature and Scholarship. If an Awardee does not

enrol by the prescribed date, then the offer of the Award lapses. Awards may be terminated before this time in accordance with clause 7 below.

#### **4. Stipend and Tuition Fees**

##### *(i) Stipend amount and duration*

The 2025 annual stipend rate is \$52,352 tax exempt. This stipend rate will be reviewed annually by the University. The stipend does not provide additional allowances for dependants.

The stipend is paid for a maximum of three years for a Doctoral student and two years for a Masters by Research student. In exceptional circumstances where a part-time award is approved, the maximum period of an Award is six years for a Doctoral student and four years for a Masters by Research student. Please contact Deakin's [Researcher Development Academy](#) for further information on part-time awards.

An Award will generally be terminated two weeks after the thesis is submitted or at the end of the period of the Award, whichever is earlier. Awards may be terminated before this time in accordance with clause 7 below.

The duration of an Award will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken towards the degree prior to commencement of the Award or during suspension of the Award and will be increased by any periods of approved additional paid sick or parental leave.

##### *(ii) Stipend Extension*

An extension of up to six months may be granted for Doctoral students where the research has been delayed due to circumstances which are beyond the Awardee's control and relate to the conduct of the research rather than of a personal nature. The Awardee must submit a [Scholarship Extension](#) application at least four weeks before the Award expires and be making satisfactory progress at the time of the application. Approval of an extension is determined by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Researcher Development.

##### *(iii) Stipend Suspension*

The stipend may be suspended where the Awardee is approved to intermit from their studies and where they are not entitled to paid leave as stated in clause 9. Suspension of an Award will generally not exceed 12 months, however in exceptional circumstances beyond the Awardee's control, periods of up to an additional 12 months may be granted.

##### *(iv) Tuition Fees amount and duration*

Student tuition fees associated with enrolment in a Masters by Research or Doctoral degree at Deakin University will be covered under the scholarship. For a Masters by Research student, fee coverage will be provided until the end of the second year of candidature (full-time equivalent). For a Doctoral student, fee coverage will be provided until the end of the fourth year of candidature (full-time equivalent). The estimated range of tuition fees for 2025 is \$33,000 to \$46,000 per year.

## 5. Allowances

### *(i) Relocation and travel allowance*

Where the Awardee must relocate to Melbourne, Geelong or Warrnambool from interstate or overseas to take up the Award, the University will provide a contribution towards the cost of relocation. Reimbursements may be made for expenses incurred for flights and shipping costs. Expenses incurred for accommodation, rental bonds or meals during the course of travel cannot be reimbursed. A single application for reimbursement can be lodged, only after commencement of the course.

The maximum relocation allowance which may be received by the student is calculated by allowing:

- \$500 for each eligible adult
- \$250 for each eligible child

Only the cost for one journey can be claimed and the maximum value of relocation expenses that a student may receive is \$1500. This journey must be applied for as one claim only.

To be eligible to apply for the relocation allowance students must:

- have commenced their HDR course
- relocate from interstate or overseas to take up the Award
- submit the application for relocation allowance within nine months of commencing candidature (including students who have transferred their candidature from another institution)
- submit original, hardcopy receipts/invoices in English (or translated in English).

For the purposes of relocation entitlements, an eligible adult or child is defined as a person in respect of whom the scholarship awardee has assumed financial and/or legal responsibility and who moves residence with the scholarship awardee.

Reimbursements will only be paid for travel that is considered by the University to be reasonably direct between the student's home location, and the study location.

## 6. Changes to enrolment

### *(i) Conversion of Degrees*

The University may approve the conversion of enrolment from a Research Masters to a Doctoral degree. Similarly, enrolment for Doctoral studies may be converted to a Research Masters. The maximum duration of the applicable award becomes that for the new research degree minus periods of study undertaken towards the related degree prior to the conversion. A student who is approved to convert a Masters by Research to a Doctoral degree may continue to receive the Award for a Doctoral degree provided there is no interval between the conversion of the Masters by Research and the commencement of the Doctoral degree or that such an interval is covered by suspension of the Award.

### *(ii) Transfer*

This award can only be taken up at the university at which the application was lodged and Awardees are expected to complete their candidature at that university. If unforeseen and exceptional circumstances arise, an Awardee may request a transfer to another university. Approval of an award transfer is at the discretion of the other university and subject to available funding at that university. The fact that an Award has been transferred is not sufficient grounds for the subsequent extension of an Award.

### *(iii) Changes to Project*

Changes to the project or principal supervision will not normally be approved unless exceptional circumstances arise during the tenure of the award. Any changes to the project or principal supervision must be approved by Deakin's Researcher Development Academy.

## **7. Termination**

The Award will be terminated two weeks after the thesis is submitted or at the end of the period of the Award, whichever is earlier. Awards will be terminated before this time (or the offer of stipend withdrawn) if any of the following criteria apply:

- the Awardee does not commence by the specified date;
- the Awardee ceases to meet any specific conditions set out in the Letter of Offer of Candidature and Scholarship;
- the Awardee ceases to meet the eligibility criteria (other than during a period of approved suspension or leave);
- the Awardee does not resume study following a period of intermission or suspension or absence from campus or make arrangements to extend that intermission or absence;
- the Awardee ceases to be a full-time student and approval has not been obtained to hold the Award on a part-time basis;
- on the death or incapacity of the Awardee;
- the Awardee withdrawal from the course;
- the University determines that the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of the Award;
- the Awardee has failed to maintain other conditions of their enrolment, including attendance for in-person delivery of coursework or adequate contact with their supervisory team;
- the Awardee has failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress;
- the Awardee has committed serious misconduct (academic or research) including, but not limited to the provision of false or misleading information;

- the Awardee has not complied with the requirements of the Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) Scholarships Procedure, the conditions of their candidature, or other policies of the University;
- the Awardee has not maintained a valid visa to remain in Australia.

## 8. Employment

An Awardee is permitted to undertake a limited amount of part-time employment, provided the work does not interfere with the progress of the research degree. Approval must be sought for periods of part-time work amounting to more than six hours per week averaged over a year. The Head of Academic Unit must certify that the work does not interfere with the progress of the research and the statement must be lodged with Deakin's Researcher Development Academy.

## 9. Leave entitlements

### *(i) Overpayments*

Awardees who receive stipend payments during a period of leave without pay will be required to repay monies received they are not entitled to. Any overpayment will be automatically recovered in full upon return from leave, or the student will be invoiced for payment. Awardees on intermission must notify the Researcher Development Academy of their return to candidature no less than fourteen days prior to the approved date of return. Failure to do so may result in payments being delayed.

In the event that Deakin University identifies a scholarship overpayment to the awardee, Deakin shall notify the awardee in writing, specifying the amount and the reason for the overpayment. The awardee will repay the overpayment amount within three months or before the end of their candidature, whichever is earlier. If immediate repayment in full is not feasible, the awardee may request a repayment plan, subject to approval by Deakin. Deakin reserves the right to offset any outstanding overpayment amounts against any future payments due to the awardee under this agreement.

### *(ii) Recreation leave*

Awardees are entitled to 20 working days' paid recreation leave for each year of the Award, calculated on a pro-rata basis. These leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the stipend but will be forfeited when the stipend is terminated. If the Awardee withdraws from candidature prior to the end of the scholarship, any accrued annual leave balances cannot be paid out to the Awardee. The agreement of the Awardee's principal or executive supervisor must be obtained before recreation leave is taken.

### *(iii) Cultural leave*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates are entitled to take up to 10 cultural leave days per calendar year, non-cumulative, for cultural and ceremonial obligations.

### *(iv) Sick leave*

Awardees are entitled to 10 working days' paid sick leave for each year of the Award. Sick leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the award but will be forfeited when the award is terminated. If the Awardee withdraws from candidature prior to the end of the scholarship, any accrued sick leave balances cannot be paid out to the Awardee. Absences of less than two weeks which are not considered to interfere with the Awardee's progress do

not require an approved intermission of candidature but must be negotiated with the principal or executive supervisor (provision of medical certificates is at the discretion of the principal or executive supervisor).

*(v) Additional Sick Leave*

An Awardee may be entitled to receive additional paid sick leave where a medical certificate can be provided.

The additional paid sick leave will be 20 working days per 1.0 Equivalent Full-time (EFT) year of scholarship up to a total of 60 working days during the duration of the stipend. The additional 20 days become available at the start of each 1.0 EFT year of scholarship and are accruable. In exceptional circumstances the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Researcher Development may approve the accrual of any part of the paid sick leave entitlement in advance of when that leave entitlement would otherwise accrue.

All additional paid sick leave claims must be approved as part of an Intermission of Candidature application. Please consult Deakin's [Researcher Development Academy](#) for further advice.

Sick leave entitlements may be used to take family carer's leave where a member of the Awardee's immediate family (defined below) requires the Awardee's care and support because of a personal illness, injury or an unexpected emergency.

A medical certificate is required for absences on carer's leave in excess of 3 consecutive days or when absences of less than three days exceed a maximum of five days in any academic year. For absences up to two weeks per year, family carer's leave must be negotiated with the Awardee's principal supervisor. The notification requirements for sick leave in excess of two weeks per year also apply where that leave is taken as carer's leave. "Immediate family" of an Awardee means a spouse, de facto partner, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, or sibling of the Awardee or of a spouse or de facto partner of the Awardee and also includes a person for whom the Awardee has caring responsibilities arising from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship relationship of equivalent status to those listed above.

*(vi) Parental leave*

Awardees who have completed 12 months of their Award (full-time equivalent) may be entitled to a maximum of 60 working days' paid parental leave within the tenure of the Award if they have, or will have, primary responsibility for the care of a newborn child during the leave. All parental leave claims must be approved as part of an Intermission of Candidature application. Please consult Deakin's [Researcher Development Academy](#) for further advice.

Any claim must be accompanied by a Birth Certificate or Statutory Declaration from the Awardee that they are the parent of the child or have accepted responsibility for the ongoing care of the child. Please see continuation of parental leave section below.

Awardees who are partners of those giving birth or adopting while receiving the Award stipend, and has completed 12 months of their Award, may be entitled to a maximum of one week's paid leave at the time of the birth. All parental leave claims must be approved as part of an Intermission of Candidature application. Please consult Deakin's [Researcher Development Academy](#) for further advice.

An Awardee who submits satisfactory evidence of being an approved applicant for the adoption of a child and the date of placement of that child may have the following entitlements:

- where the child is at the date of adoption under 12 months of age, paid leave for a continuous period of 60 working days' commencing from the date of placement;
- where the child is at the date of adoption 12 months of age or older, paid leave for a continuous period of six weeks commencing from the date of placement.

## 10. Research overseas

The Awardee may be permitted to undertake fieldwork or research overseas when this is considered essential for the completion of the student's course by the student's principal or executive supervisor and Head of Academic Unit. In such cases the Award may be tenable overseas for up to 12 months, or in special cases for up to 18 months. Paid overseas study will be permitted only if adequate supervision can be maintained and the Awardee remains enrolled. Applications for overseas study must be lodged with Deakin's Researcher Development Academy and be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Researcher Development prior to commencement of the overseas work.

The Awardee will not generally be allowed to undertake overseas study in the first six months of scholarship tenure. Candidature undertaken prior to the taking up of the Award will be taken into account in determining the earliest date on which the Awardee may pursue paid overseas study.

## 11. Research at other organisations

The University may permit an Awardee to conduct part of the research at other organisations provided that the Awardee remains enrolled at the University and adequate support and supervision can be arranged.

## 12. Other courses

An Awardee may not engage in any academic course of study leading to a qualification which is not an essential part of the Awardee's HDR program.

## 13. Specific obligations of Awardees

Awardees must:

- diligently, and to the best of their ability, apply themselves to the successful completion of their HDR, and provide all reports required by the University;
- comply with all statutes, regulations, policies and procedures (including disciplinary provisions and Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) Scholarships Procedure) of the University;
- comply with any additional conditions set out in the Letter of Offer of Candidature and Scholarship;
- advise their Supervisor, Head of Academic Unit and Deakin's Researcher Development Academy as soon as reasonably possible of any change in circumstances that may affect the Awardee's eligibility to continue to receive payments under their Award.
- acknowledge the Australian Government's support in any published materials related to your HDR. This relates to any time, both during and after completion of your HDR. Materials include items such as books, articles, newsletters or other literary or artistic works which relate to your HDR project. The acknowledgement must be in a prominent place and in an appropriate form. The acknowledgement must include the mention of your support through an "Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship".