Higher Degree by Research Scholarship Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The Australian Catholic University (henceforth “ACU” or “the University”) offers graduate research scholarships and the Australian Government Research Training Program (henceforth “RTP”) Scholarships to support domestic and international HDR candidates undertaking a Research Doctorate degree or a Research Master’s degree, as defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

(2) The purpose of the Higher Degree by Research (henceforth “HDR”) Scholarship Policy (henceforth “the Policy”) is to provide a framework for establishing and managing the University’s graduate research scholarship program.

Section 2 - Policy Scope

(3) This policy applies to all ACU HDR candidates either applying for, in receipt of, or supported by:

a. University-awarded stipend scholarships.
b. University-awarded tuition fee scholarships and sponsorships and any related allowance; or
c. University-awarded supplementary or top-up stipends, or other scholarship awards.

Section 3 - Definitions

Term	Definition
Doctorate or Doctoral	Refers to the Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Ministry.
Graduate Research School	Is responsible for administering the candidate life-cycle requirements of HDR candidates.
Higher Degree by Research (HDR)	Is a degree which meets the specifications of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). It includes Doctoral degrees (AQF Level 10) and Master’s (Research) degrees (AQF Level 9). It excludes Master’s degrees (coursework) and Bachelor Honours degrees.
RTP	Means the Australian Government Research Training Program.
RTP Allowance	Means a scholarship funded by the RTP and paid by the University to a candidate to assist them with ancillary costs of an HDR course, including but not limited to: • for international candidates: ◦ a single overseas student health cover policy approved by the Commonwealth, and; ◦ study related relocation costs.
RTP Fees Offset	Is a type of RTP Scholarship to assist with course fees that would otherwise be payable by a HDR candidate.
RTP Guidelines	Means the Higher Education Support (Commonwealth Scholarships) Guidelines 2025.
RTP Scholarship	Means any or all of an RTP Fees Offset, RTP Stipend or an RTP Allowance.

This policy document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of staff printing this document to always refer to the ACU Policy Portal for the latest version.

Term	Definition
RTP Stipend	Is a type of RTP Scholarship to assist with general living expenses.

Section 4 - Policy Statement

Part A - General Principles

(4) This policy outlines the framework for the awarding and administration of the University's graduate research scholarships, including those offered through the Australian Government Research Training Program.

(5) The graduate research scholarship program is intended to attract and support talented HDR candidates from all backgrounds. It offers a variety of merit-based scholarships, including those that foster strategic priorities or industry partnerships.

(6) Scholarships may be provided in the form of a living allowance (stipend), tuition fee scholarship or sponsorship, a supplementary or top-up stipend, or other types of awards.

(7) Scholarships will be publicly promoted and can be applied for via the formal application process. Information on scholarship rounds and relevant application dates is available on the Graduate Research School website.

(8) Candidates will be provided with facilities and supervision in accordance with the HDR Supervision Procedure and the HDR Admissions and Enrolment Procedure.

(9) Candidates may submit a complaint or grievance in relation to the application of this policy or supporting procedure in accordance with the Student and Public Complaints Policy.

Part B - Types of Funding of Scholarships

(10) The University provides a range of scholarships funded by the Australian Government, central University resources and industry funded and other sources. The Higher Degree by Research Scholarship Policy has been developed in accordance with the Higher Education Support (Commonwealth Scholarships) Guidelines 2025 and should be read in conjunction with the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

(11) In accordance with the Higher Education Support (Commonwealth Scholarships) Guidelines 2025, the University receives a block grant amount from the Australian Government from which the University is entitled to award Research Training Program (RTP) scholarships: RTP Fees Offset, RTP Stipend, and RTP Allowance, to selected applicants, subject to the Higher Education Support (Commonwealth Scholarships) Guidelines 2025.

(12) The formal process for determining the eligibility, conditions, and value of all scholarships (in line with University and Australian Government requirements) is detailed in the HDR Scholarship Procedure.

(13) All other HDR scholarships and stipends managed by ACU are also outlined in the HDR Scholarship Procedure.

Section 5 - Monitoring and Review

(14) The URC is responsible for the administration of HDR scholarships, subject to the general supervision of the Academic Board.

(15) The Chair of the URC may act executively out-of-session on behalf of the Committee, subject to any action being

reported to the URC at its next meeting.

(16) The URC will report regularly to the Academic Board and make recommendations on the award of HDR scholarships directly to the Board.

(17) The Graduate Research School is responsible for monitoring compliance with this procedure to ensure consistency, fairness, and alignment with University policies and external regulatory requirements.

(18) The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) will ensure that the Procedure aligns with the University's policies and external regulatory requirements.

(19) Comprehensive reviews of HDR programs are conducted normally every five (5) years but no later than seven (7) years. The reviews are informed by:

a. recommendations from panels convened for the purpose by the Director, Graduate Research School;
b. external referencing of the success of HDR candidate cohorts and HDR candidate satisfaction against comparable programs;
c. strategic priorities of the University; and
d. the results of regular interim monitoring.

Section 6 - Roles and Responsibilities

Approval Authority (approves all new policies and major amendments to reviewed policies)	Academic Board
Governing Authority (endorses new policies and major amendments to reviewed policies; approves minor amendments to policy; approves procedures)	University Research Committee
Responsible Officer (oversees the development and review of policies and procedures; approves minor amendments to procedures; approves editorial amendments to policies and procedures)	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise)

Status and Details

Status	Future
Effective Date	1st January 2027
Review Date	1st January 2032
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	9th November 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Abid Khan Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)
Responsible Manager	Michelle Lopez Director, Graduate Research School
Enquiries Contact	Michelle Lopez Director, Graduate Research School Research and Enterprise