

**IMPORTANT: Please ensure you retain this copy of the conditions for award and continue to refer to them throughout your candidature.**

## **Conditions for Award 2016 Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)**

The Australian Postgraduate Awards (**APA**) is funded by the Australian Government, Department of Education and Training. APA scholarships are awarded to students of exceptional research potential undertaking a Higher Degree Research (**HDR**) in Australia. The APAs are awarded to both local and international students who hold an International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS). APAs are provided to assist with students' general living costs.

The duration of a full-time APA is three years for a doctoral candidate and two years for a master's research candidate. The University has the expectation that, with an appropriately scoped project and consistent effort, APA holders will complete their work and submit theses for examination within this time frame. In accepting the APA, the APA holder undertakes to work towards this goal. The University may approve a part-time APA in accordance with paragraph 4.2 of these conditions.

The information contained in this document is based on the Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2012 for APA available at <http://www.innovation.gov.au>

### **1. ELIGIBILITY**

1.1. To be eligible for an APA, a student must:

- (a) have completed a Bachelor Degree with First Class Honours, or be regarded by the University as having an equivalent level of attainment in accordance with paragraph 1.2; and
- (b) be undertaking a higher degree by research (HDR) at the University in the year of the APA (APAs are not available to applicants whose enrolment into a postgraduate research program has not been accepted by the University); and
- (c) be enrolled as a full-time student, unless the University has approved a part-time APA for a domestic student under paragraph 4.2 of these Conditions; and
- (d) be a domestic or an overseas student (who is an IPRS holder from 2011), as defined in *the Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cth); and
- (e) not have completed a degree at the same or higher level as the proposed candidature; and
- (f) not previously have held an Australian Government-funded postgraduate research scholarship, unless it was terminated within six months of the APA payments commencing; and
- (g) not be receiving an equivalent award, scholarship (excluding an IPRS) or salary providing a benefit greater than 75% of the APA stipend rate to undertake the HDR. Income earned from sources unrelated to the course of study is not subject to the 75% rule. This paragraph (g) does not apply to recipients of a *JRE – Engineering Cadetship*.

1.2 Where applicants do not hold a Bachelor Degree with First Class Honours, the University may determine that the applicant has demonstrated an equivalent level of academic attainment. In determining an equivalent level of academic attainment, the University may consider previous study, relevant work experience, research publications, referees' reports and other research experience.

## 2. SELECTION POLICY

2.1. The APA is awarded in accordance with the eligibility requirements outlined in the Guidelines and on a competitive basis using the respective Faculty/Institute's scoring system based on:

- (a) academic merit of the applicant; and
- (b) research and other relevant experience of the applicant; and
- (c) publications record of the applicant; and
- (d) relevance of the proposed research to the University's research strengths.

2.2. Further details of the Selection Policy/scoring system is available from the following web site: <https://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/future-researchers/research-degrees-uts/research-scholarships>

## 3. TENURE CONDITIONS

### 3.1. Acceptance

Awardees should indicate the acceptance of their APA by the prescribed deadline in their offer letters; otherwise, the University may withdraw the APA if the awardee does not respond by the prescribed date.

### 3.2. Commencement

3.2.1. Newly commencing students must enrol and commence their award between 1 January and 31 March of the year for which the offer is made, unless the offer of award is made after 31 March. The University may grant delayed commencement of the award to the following semester of the same year where, due to significant prior commitments or exceptional circumstances, an awardee is not able to commence by the offered semester.

3.2.2. Currently enrolled students may commence their award from the date of the APA offer letter, but not before 1<sup>st</sup> January.

3.2.3. The APA cannot be deferred to a later year.

### 3.3. Duration

3.3.1. A full-time APA may be held for three years for doctoral studies and two years for masters by research studies. The duration of a part-time award is six years for doctoral studies and four years for masters by research studies (see paragraph 4.2 below).

3.3.2. The maximum APA tenure will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken:

- (a) towards the degree prior to commencement of the APA; and/or
- (b) towards the degree during suspension of the APA (unless the study was taken overseas as part of a Commonwealth Government financially supported international postgraduate research scholarship or award (see paragraph 1(g)); and/or
- (c) previously while receiving an Australian Postgraduate Coursework Award

3.3.3. The duration of an APA will be increased by any periods of paid sick or maternity leave approved by the University (see paragraph 5.4)

3.3.4. If a part-time APA is converted to a full-time APA, the period of the time that the student is regarded as having been in receipt of the part-time APA immediately prior to the conversion will be halved for the purpose of determining the duration the awardee is regarded as having been in receipt of a full-time APA immediately after conversion.

3.3.5. If a full-time APA is converted to a part-time APA, the period of the time that the student is regarded as having been in receipt of the full-time APA immediately prior to the conversion will be doubled for the purpose of determining the duration the awardee is regarded as having been in receipt of a part-time APA immediately after conversion.

#### 3.4. Extension

3.4.1. The University may consider extending the duration of an APA for a doctoral student of up to six months provided the student is making satisfactory progress and the grounds for the extension relate to the study and are beyond the control of the student. The circumstances affecting the research should also be evident in the student's review of progress.

Applications for extension must be supported by the principal supervisor and be endorsed by the Faculty/Institute. Extensions will be subject to approval by the Dean of the Graduate Research School. The procedure for applying for an extension is available from the UTS intranet (Staff Connect) after the student is enrolled: <https://staff.uts.edu.au/howdoi/Pages/Researching/Research%20students/Research%20scholarships/apply-for-scholarship-extension.aspx>

3.4.2. Extensions to the duration of an APA on the grounds of employment commitments will not be accepted.

3.4.3. Extensions to the duration of an APA for a masters by research candidate are not permitted.

## 4. OTHER CONDITIONS

### 4.1. Ongoing Eligibility

The University monitors APA holders' ongoing eligibility and progress to ensure that each student continues to meet eligibility requirements set out in paragraph 1 and maintain satisfactory progress. Except in special circumstances which the Graduate Research School Board of the Academic Board determines, throughout the tenure of the APA a student shall:

- (a) diligently pursue a course of study in the University as a candidate for the degree enrolled in; and
- (b) submit to the relevant Faculty each half year a report to enable review of progress in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Graduate Research School Board from time to time as per Section 11.13 of the UTS student and related rules found at <http://www.gsu.uts.edu.au/rules/11-13.html>
- (c) successfully complete the required candidature assessments as per Section 11.14 of the UTS student and related rules found at <http://www.gsu.uts.edu.au/rules/11-14.html> and
- (d) comply with the rules and regulations of the University concerning postgraduate students which can be found at: <http://www.gsu.uts.edu.au/rules/11-index.html>.

An APA holder must give at least twenty-one days' notice of intention to relinquish the APA (e.g.: on discontinuation of studies).

#### 4.2. APAs for Part-time Study

4.2.1. The University may approve a part-time APA if:

- (a) the student is a domestic student; **and**
- (b) the student has reasons acceptable to the University that preclude a full-time study for part or all of the course of study; or
- (c) the student is undertaking a *JRE – Engineering Cadetship* as specified in the Attachment to the Joint Research Engagement Conditions of Grant.

4.2.2. An APA may not be held part-time for employment reasons.

4.2.3. For the purpose of 4.2.1 (b), the University must be satisfied that the reasons relate to caring commitments, a medical condition, a disability or other circumstance which limits the student's capacity to undertake full-time study.

4.2.4. Application for the part-time APA requires a written request to the Dean of the Graduate Research School with the support of the principal supervisor and the Responsible Academic Officer (RAO). A separate application form for part-time enrolment for the candidature is from the UTS intranet (Staff Connect) after the student is enrolled: <https://staff.uts.edu.au/howdoi/Pages/Researching/Research%20students/Research%20student%20administration/change-my-study-load.aspx>

4.2.5. Students holding an APA on a part-time basis are required to change to full-time if a change to their circumstances means that they no longer qualify to hold their APA on a part-time basis.

- 4.2.6. The University will subject part-time APA students to the same restrictions on employment as full-time APA holders.
- 4.2.7. A part-time APA holder is expected to progress at half the rate of a full-time APA holder.
- 4.2.8. Part-time APA holders may revert to full-time study at any time with the permission of the Faculty.
- 4.2.9. The stipend associated with a part-time APA is presently considered to be taxable by the Australian Government. As the University does not provide advice regarding taxation matters, it is the responsibility of the individual student to seek his/her own independent professional advice prior to submitting his/her tax return.

#### 4.3. **Suspension of Award**

- 4.3.1. After completion of the first six months of the APA the student may be granted up to twelve months (two semesters) suspension of his/her APA with the permission of the University.
- 4.3.2. Periods of approved suspension will be added to the normal time for which the APA may be held. Any periods of study undertaken towards the degree during suspension of the APA will be deducted from the maximum period of tenure.
- 4.3.3. If the APA holder remains enrolled while his/her APA is suspended, this period of enrolment will be deducted from the APA duration; that is, the duration of the APA will be reduced. It is therefore recommended that the APA holder applies for a concurrent interruption of his/her candidature. Leave application form for scholarship holders is available on the UTS intranet (Staff Connect) after the student is enrolled: <https://staff.uts.edu.au/howdoi/Pages/Researching/Research%20students/Research%20scholarships/apply-for-scholarship-leave.aspx>
- 4.3.4. Note that if the APA holder does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of suspension, or does not make arrangements to extend the period of suspension, the APA will be terminated.
- 4.3.5. If prior approval of a suspension of the APA is not obtained, the APA holder will be deemed to be absent without permission and the APA will terminate.

#### 4.4. **Conversion of Degrees**

- 4.4.1. Students may convert from a masters by research degree to a doctoral degree or from a doctoral degree to a masters by research degree and continue to receive their APA.
- 4.4.2. A student who completes a masters by research degree may continue to receive their APA for a doctoral degree provided there is no interval between the completion of the

masters by research degree and the commencement of the doctoral degree or that such an interval is covered by suspension of the APA.

4.4.3. The maximum duration of a converted APA becomes that for the new research degree minus periods of study undertaken towards the related degree prior to the conversion.

#### **4.5. Paid Employment**

4.5.1. Full-time APA holders are required to work on their research project and complete their thesis within the allocated period and are only permitted to undertake a limited amount of paid employment which must not interfere with the student's study and progress.

4.5.2. HDR students are expected to devote a minimum of 35 hours per week for full-time study and 17.5 hours per week for part time study. Students engaging in other activities such as paid employment must not compromise the average weekly amount of time they devote to their research project. APA holders must seek approval of the RAO in their Faculty or Institute prior to engaging in part-time work in excess of 8 hours per week.

4.5.3. The RAO's decision will take the principal supervisor/s' recommendation into consideration. Details of paid employment or other activities, which temporarily interfere with the capacity to devote the required minimum hours per week to the research project, must be recorded in the student's review of progress.

#### **4.6. Transfer of Awards between Institutions (APA only)**

4.6.1. Current APA holders who wish to transfer to another institution may continue to receive their APA only if their new institution agrees to its continuation and is able to support the transferring student from its APA grant amounts.

4.6.2. Current APA holders from another Australian university who wish to transfer their APA to the University of Technology, Sydney are required to apply in the annual APA round of applications at this University. Their application will be considered and ranked with all other applications received in that round and in accordance with the University's selection policy specified in this document.

4.6.3. A transfer of the APA will not in itself constitute grounds for an extension of the APA tenure.

#### **4.7. Termination of Award**

4.7.1. The APA will terminate:

- (a) if the student ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in paragraph 1 other than during a period in which the APA has been suspended with approval or during a period of leave in accordance with paragraph 5.4; or

- (b) when the APA holder ceases to be a full-time student and approval has not been obtained from the University to hold the APA on a part-time basis; or
- (c) upon submission of the thesis for examination or when the APA expires, whichever is the earlier; or
- (d) if, after due enquiry, the University determines that
  - i. the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance to the offer of the APA; or
  - ii. the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress; or
  - iii. the student has committed serious misconduct, including, but not limited to, the provision of false or misleading information as outlined in paragraph 6.1.

4.7.2. If the APA is terminated, it cannot be re-activated unless the termination occurred in error, or on re-submission of the thesis. For thesis re-writes, the APA may be re-activated until the thesis is finally submitted, to the maximum duration of the APA.

#### 4.8. Scholarship Overpayment

An APA holder is required to repay any APA overpayment within thirty calendar days of being requested to do so by the University. APA overpayments are viewed as financial obligations by the University and failure to repay may result in sanctions being placed on your candidature as per Rule 4.4 of the Student and Related Rules at UTS. More information is available at <http://www.gsu.uts.edu.au/rules/4-4.html>

## 5. BENEFITS

### 5.1. Annual Stipend

The annual stipends for 2016 are:

- (a) \$26,288 (currently tax-free) for full-time study mode; and
- (b) \$13,144 (currently taxable) for part-time study mode.

These rates are indexed every year.

5.1.1. Payments are made in equal fortnightly instalments directly to a nominated account in the APA holder's name with an Australian Authorised Deposit-taking Institution through the University's payment system. Part-time stipends may be adjusted to withhold tax. The stipend rates are indexed annually from the 1<sup>st</sup> of Jan every year.

5.1.2. Under Section 23(z) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936 (as amended), full-time APAs are presently exempt from taxation. It is the responsibility of the APA holder to assess the tax liability of their APA. The University cannot provide advice regarding taxation. Please refer to the Australian Tax Office Website for further information: <http://www.ato.gov.au>

### 5.2. Relocation Allowance

- 5.2.1. The University may pay an APA holder a relocation allowance for the cost of relocating to Sydney from within Australia to take up the APA at the University subject to paragraph 5.2.5. This covers travel & removal expenses for themselves, their spouse and dependants up to the maximum rate applicable in addition to the annual stipend. The relocation allowance limits are:
- (a) up to \$505 per eligible adult; and
  - (b) up to \$255 per eligible child; and
  - (c) up to a maximum total value of \$1,520
- 5.2.2. Where travel is by air, an eligible student will be reimbursed for travel cost equivalent to the cheapest economy or student airfare for a one-way trip. Proof of purchase and boarding passes must be provided.
- 5.2.3. Where travel is by car, an eligible student will be reimbursed for travel cost of a “per kilometre” allowance for one direct trip, as per the University’s motor vehicle kilometre reimbursement claim procedure. The total travel cost must not exceed the cheapest equivalent airfare (excluding accommodation and meal cost) as per paragraph 5.2.2. Fuel receipts may be used as evidence of travel.
- 5.2.4. Removal expenses are only for moving personal items to Sydney. Original tax receipts with the supplier’s ABN and receipts must be provided.
- 5.2.5. A completed scholarship allowance form must be submitted to Graduate Research School detailing the expenses with the relevant original tax invoice and receipts attached and evidence of travel. Claims must be made within six (6) months of commencement of the APA.
- 5.2.6. Relocation allowances are not payable for travel undertaken after completion of studies, or termination of APA.

### 5.3. Thesis Allowance

- 5.3.1. The University may pay a thesis allowance up to the maximum rate applicable at the time of submission of the thesis in addition to the annual stipend subject to the APA holder satisfying the conditions set out in paragraph 5.3.2. The allowance is a contribution to the cost of production of the thesis (e.g. printing, binding) and does not include costs such as the purchase of computer equipment or postage. The thesis allowances limit are:
- (a) up to \$420 for a masters by research thesis; and
  - (b) up to \$840 for a doctoral thesis.
- 5.3.2. The allowance must be claimed within one year of re/submission date of the thesis, or lodgement date and within two years of termination of the APA. The combined total of allowances for submission and re-submission cannot not exceed the approved maximum rate applicable at the time of submission of the thesis.

5.3.3. The application form for the thesis allowance is available from Graduate Research School website. Original tax receipts with the supplier's ABN associated with the submission and re-submission of a thesis or the lodgement of the bound copies must be attached.

#### 5.4. Leave Entitlements

5.4.1. APA holders are entitled to take up to twenty (20) working days' paid recreation leave and up to ten (10) days' paid sick leave for each year of their APA, pro rata basis. Up to 5 days of their paid sick leave may be used for family leave or family caring responsibilities. Leave for these purposes may be accrued but must be taken within the tenure of the APA. Leave periods for these purposes are not added to the tenure of the APA as students continue to be paid during the period of leave.

Application for recreation and standard sick leave (up to 10 days per year) is not required. However, APA holders are required to report the number of days of recreation and sick leave taken each semester in their Review of Progress.

5.4.2. APA holders are entitled to receive **additional paid sick leave** of up to a total of twelve (12) weeks during the duration of the APA for periods of illness where a student has insufficient sick leave entitlements available under paragraph 5.4.1 for which a medical certificate has been provided. This period of leave is added to the tenure of the APA.

5.4.3. Additional sick leave entitlements may also be used to cover family leave or family caring responsibilities after exhausting their recreation and sick leave entitlements.

5.4.4. APA holders who have completed twelve (12) months of their APA are entitled to a maximum of twelve (12) weeks of paid **maternity leave** during the duration of the APA. This period of leave is added to the tenure of the APA. Unpaid maternity leave may be accessed through the suspension provision.

5.4.5. APA holders who are partners of women giving birth during the APA and who have completed twelve (12) months of their APA are entitled to five (5) days of paid **parenting leave** at the time of the birth or adoption. This period of leave is added to the tenure of the APA. Unpaid parenting leave may be accessed through the suspension provision.

5.4.6. Periods of leave do not attract leave loading. Scholarship leave application forms for additional paid sick leave, maternity and parenting leave are downloadable from Graduate Research School website. Completed forms must be submitted to GRS attached with relevant certified supporting documents.

## 6. OTHER INFORMATION

### 6.1. Provision of False or Misleading Information

If the University knows or has reason to believe that a student in receipt of an APA has provided false or misleading information to the University in relation to that APA, the University will immediately:

- (a) re-assess the student's entitlement to the APA; and
- (b) Notify the Department of Education of the suspected offence and provide a copy of the student's application and any other relevant information requested by the Department.

## 6.2. Insurance

6.2.1. Research students should be aware that the University only provides a minimal level of automatic insurance cover for personal accidents for enrolled students, and only whilst the student is on campus. Where a student's research involves high-risk activities or the student research is located off-campus, he/she should contact the Faculty Research Office to request approval so that the activity is covered by insurance.

6.2.2. Research students conducting fieldwork or conference presentations interstate or overseas will have insurance cover only if the activity is approved UTS business. Please contact the Faculty Research Office for approval. For information on insurance please go to the UTS Insurance Website at <http://www.fsu.uts.edu.au/insurance/>.