



# Research Students Centre

## QUT Rules for 2008

### Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA)

Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) scholarships are awarded to students of exceptional research potential undertaking a Higher Degree by Research (HDR). APAs are provided to assist with general living costs.

Please note these QUT rules are based on DEEWR's 2008 APA Guidelines.

Please consult the Full APA 2008 Guidelines which are updated on DEEWR's website at: [http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/guidelines/csg\\_guide.htm](http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/guidelines/csg_guide.htm)

The following QUT APA abbreviated rules have been taken from the DEEWR Guidelines and written to comply with the QUT Doctor of Philosophy Regulation. The PhD regulations are located at the website: <http://www.rsc.qut.edu.au/aboutus/policies/qut.jsp>

Scholarships are awarded for a three year term for Doctoral studies and up to two years for Masters study. QUT has the strong expectation that, with an appropriately scoped project and consistent effort, scholarship holders will complete their work and submit theses for external examination within this timeframe.

In accepting this award, you undertake to work towards this goal.

#### 1 Basic Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for an APA, a student must:

- 1.1 have completed a Bachelor Degree with First Class Honours, or meet QUT's requirements for Honours 1 Equivalence (see 3 below).
- 1.2 be undertaking a Higher Degree by Research (HDR); and
- 1.3 be enrolled as a full-time student, unless QUT has approved a part-time APA under paragraph 4 of these Guidelines; and
- 1.4 be a domestic student i.e. an Australian citizen, or has been granted Australian Permanent Resident status by the closing date, or is a New Zealand citizen living in Australia at closing date.
- 1.5 if undertaking a Research Masters, not hold a Research Doctorate or a Research Masters degree or equivalent or, if undertaking a Research Doctorate, not hold a Research Doctorate degree or equivalent research qualification; and
- 1.6 must not previously have held an Australian Government-funded postgraduate research scholarship (excluding an Endeavour International Postgraduate Research Scholarship or its predecessor, International Postgraduate Scholarship), unless it was terminated within six months of the scholarship's payments commencing; and
- 1.7 must not normally be receiving an equivalent award, scholarship 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.

#### 2 Disability

- 2.1 The definition of disability applied is consistent with [QUT Policy A/8.3 Disability services policy](#), which includes the following definition of a disability:

As outlined in the relevant legislation, a disability may be either temporary or permanent, total or partial, physical, psychological or psychiatric, life-long or acquired. Also included are people who require devices or aids for assistance, or are accompanied by guide dogs.

- 2.2 Also consistent with this policy, it is expected that in the processing of applications for scholarship and scholarship extension:

Reasonable accommodations are to be provided for people with disabilities. It is the responsibility of the student or staff member to substantiate their eligibility for disability services.

### 3 Equivalent Attainment to Bachelor with First Class Honours

If a student does not hold a Bachelor degree with First Class Honours, then QUT may determine that the student has demonstrated an equivalent level of academic attainment. In determining that a student has demonstrated an equivalent level of academic attainment, QUT may consider previous study, relevant work experience, research publications, referees' reports and other research experience.

### 4 Approval of a Part-time APA

- 4.1 QUT may approve a part-time APA for a student only if:

- (a) the student has exceptional circumstances; or
- (b) the student is undertaking Commercialisation Training Scheme (CTS) training as specified in CTS Guidelines at the website:  
<http://www.rsc.qut.edu.au/studentsstaff/gradcert/scholarship.jsp>

- 4.2 The exceptional circumstances must relate to significant caring commitments or a medical condition, such as:

- 4.2.1 caring responsibilities for a pre-school child;
- 4.2.2 caring responsibilities for school-aged children as a sole parent with limited access to outside support;
- 4.2.3 caring responsibilities for an invalid or disabled spouse, child or parent; or
- 4.2.4 a medical condition, the existence of which is supported by medical certification, and which limits the student's capacity to undertake full-time study.

- 4.3 In determining exceptional circumstances when approving a part-time APA, QUT will not determine that a student is in exceptional circumstances unless it is satisfied that the student's personal or family circumstances are such that it would be unreasonable to expect the student to study on a full-time basis.

A Statutory Declaration or Birth Certificate or other proof is necessary to substantiate any of the conditions above.

Part-time awards are not available to applicants seeking to undertake paid employment on a full-time or substantial part-time basis, and recipients are subject to the same restrictions on the amount of employment as full time APA recipients.

Part-time awardees are expected to progress at half the time of a full time award. Extensions may be considered for Doctoral candidates. No extensions are possible for Masters candidates.

APA holders approved to study part-time may revert to full time study at any time with the permission of Research Degrees Committee on the Change to Candidature form at:  
<http://www.rsc.qut.edu.au/All%20Forms/Forms/index.jsp#Continuing>

Part-time awards are taxable. The part-time rate is adjusted for taxation so that part-time award holders receive half the amount paid to full-time award holders. However, part time awards will be taxed at the level as if you were claiming QUT as the tax free threshold.

See [Attachment 1](#) for the current value of allowances.

## 5 Value and payment of award

5.1 An award shall carry a stipend in the range indicated in [Attachment 1](#) and as determined by QUT.

### 5.2 Relocation Allowance

5.2.1 QUT will make reimbursement payments to students for eligible claims for relocation allowance up to the approved maximum amount specified in [Attachment 1](#). An eligible claim for relocation allowance is a claim made by a student for the cost of relocating themselves, their spouse and dependants to a new place of residence to enable the student to undertake the HDR.

5.2.2 A claim for relocation allowance is not an eligible claim unless:

5.2.2.1 remaining at the former place of residence would have been a significant impediment to undertaking the HDR; and

5.2.2.2 the student has produced complete receipts for the claim and commenced their award; and

5.2.2.3 it is a claim for the cost of air travel, travel by car or removal expenses to the new place of residence.

5.2.3 QUT will pay relocation allowance for an eligible claim, subject to the maximum value specified in [Attachment 1](#), as follows:

(a) the cost of:

(i) air travel expenses, up to a maximum amount equivalent to the cheapest airfare to Brisbane from another Australian city for the holder, spouse and dependants; or

(ii) travel by car calculated using a per kilometre rate of allowance as determined by QUT up to the comparable economy class or student airfare, whichever is the lower amount; and

(b) removal expenses.

5.2.4 Expenses for the cost of any accommodation or meals obtained during the course of travel may not be reimbursed through relocation allowance.

5.2.5 For the purpose of relocation allowance:

5.2.5.1 an eligible adult is either a spouse or adult dependant. A spouse is a person who is married to or in a bona fide de facto relationship with the student. An adult dependant is a person for whom the student or their spouse has substantial caring responsibilities; and

5.2.5.2 an eligible child is a natural or adopted child of the student or their spouse, who is:

(i) less than 18 years of age; or

(ii) less than 25 years of age and is undertaking full-time study.

### 5.3 Thesis Allowance

5.3.1 QUT will make reimbursement payments to students for eligible claims for thesis allowance up to the approved maximum amount specified in [Attachment 1](#).

5.3.2 An eligible claim for thesis allowance is a claim made by a student for the costs of

producing a Masters thesis or Doctorate thesis. These costs may include costs associated with the re-submission of a thesis, or the lodgement of bound copies of the thesis.

- 5.3.3 A claim for thesis allowance is not an eligible claim unless the student has produced complete receipts for the claim and made the claim within one year of submission, or resubmission, of the thesis and no more than two years after termination of the APA. The amount paid will be up to the maximum rate applicable at the time of submission of the thesis. The allowance is a contribution to the costs of production of the thesis and does not include costs such as purchase of computer equipment. The relevant faculty must provide specialised software required for thesis production.
- 5.3.4 In exceptional circumstances, students may apply to QUT for a waiver of the relevant time limit on claiming the thesis allowance with any decision being at the discretion of the Research Degrees Committee (RDC). The circumstances must be beyond the student's control.

## 6 Research Training Scheme (HECS Exemption)

Normally, APA holders will receive a Research Training Scheme (RTS) exemption or QUT funded tuition place for the duration of the award. RTS is normally given for up to four years for a full time Doctoral degree and up to two years for a full time Masters by Research degree.

## 7 Term of award

- 7.1 An applicant offered an award by QUT shall normally indicate acceptance of the offer within 14 days of its receipt.
- 7.2 At QUT, an award must be taken up by 21 March in the year that the award is offered for, unless the offer of award is made after 21 March. QUT may withdraw the scholarship if the student does not commence by the prescribed date.
- 7.2.1 The duration of a full-time APA is three years for a student undertaking Research Doctorate studies, and up to two years for a student undertaking Research Masters studies. The duration of a part-time APA is six years for Research Doctorate studies and up to four years for Research Masters studies.
- 7.2.2 The duration of an APA will be shortened if the submission of the soft-bound thesis to the Research Students Centre for examination is before the scholarship end date. The APA will be terminated in the fortnight that the thesis is submitted for examination to the Research Students Centre, if the award has not already ended.
- 7.2.3 The duration of an APA will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken:
- 7.2.3.1 towards the degree prior to the commencement of the APA; or
- 7.2.3.2 towards the degree during deferral of the APA (unless the study was undertaken as part of an Australian Government-supported international postgraduate research scholarship or award); or
- 7.2.3.3 previously while receiving an Australian Postgraduate Coursework Award
- 7.3 The duration of an APA will be increased by any periods of paid maternity leave; additional sick leave and parenting leave approved by QUT (see 8.5 below).
- 7.4 QUT may extend by six months the tenure for an award for a Doctoral candidate, who commenced candidature at the point of taking up the award, where the research has been delayed due to circumstances beyond the candidate's control. However requests for extensions are not automatically approved. The circumstances under which extensions are sought **must be related to the research and not be of a personal nature** and the student is making satisfactory progress. An application to extend the period of tenure of the APA award must be submitted to Research Degrees Committee, within three months of the end of the APA award. Any delays must be highlighted in the annual progress reports. The faculty will fund fifty percent of any scholarship extension approved.

Extension Request Forms can be obtained from the webpage:  
<http://www.rsc.qut.edu.au/All%20Forms/Forms/index.jsp#Continuing>

- 7.5 Requests for extensions will **not** be approved for a student who received an award, with a period of prior enrolment in the course for which they received the scholarship. The scholarship was granted based on the expectation that the student will continue to maintain satisfactory progress, which involves a timely completion (see 7.2.1 above)
- 7.6 QUT will not approve an extension to the duration of an APA for a Research Masters student.
- 7.7 If a part-time APA is converted to a full-time APA then the period of 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 student is regarded as having been in receipt of a full-time APA immediately after conversion.
- 7.8 If a full-time APA is converted to a part-time APA then the period of 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 student is regarded as having been in receipt of a part-time APA immediately after conversion.

## 8 Conditions of Scholarship

### 8.1 Ongoing Eligibility

QUT will monitor students' ongoing eligibility through the Annual Progress Reports and degree milestones.

### 8.2 Suspension

An APA student may apply to Research Degrees Committee for leave of absence from the PhD and suspension of the APA for periods up to twelve months (see Reg 9.8 in the PhD Regs). Periods of study undertaken during a suspension will be deducted from the maximum period of tenure of the award.

Leave Forms are accessible via the Research Forms portal in QUT Virtual:

<https://qutvirtual.qut.edu.au/>

If prior approval of a suspension is not obtained, the award holder shall be deemed to be absent without permission and the scholarship shall terminate.

If the APA holder does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of suspension, or does not make arrangements to extend that period of suspension, the award will terminate.

### 8.3 Transfer of award

Students are expected to complete their candidature at the institution at which the APA was originally awarded. **APA funds are not transferable between institutions for student who commence from 2002 onwards.** The transfer of candidature with a scholarship does not constitute grounds for a subsequent extension of the award.

### 8.4 Conversion of Degrees

8.4.1 Students may convert from a Research Masters degree to a Research Doctorate degree or from a Research Doctorate degree to a Research Masters degree, and continue to receive their APA. The maximum duration of a converted scholarship becomes that for the new degree. (See PhD Regs 7.1.1 for conditions)

8.4.2 A student who completes a Research Masters degree may continue to receive their APA for a Research Doctorate degree provided there is no interval between the completion of the Research Masters and the commencement of the Research Doctorate degree, or that such an interval is covered by deferral of the APA. In approving conversion from Masters to Doctoral study: The maximum period of an APA for a student progressing from Masters or Doctoral study is three years from the date the student took up the APA as a Masters student;

## 8.5 Leave Entitlements

- 8.5.1 Students will receive up to 20 days recreation leave and ten days sick leave for each year of the APA. These leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the APA but will be forfeited when the APA is terminated. These leave entitlements can be taken at any time within the term of the award by agreement with the supervisor and do not require Research Degrees Committee approval or notification.

In addition, a period of leave that is not recreation leave and is up to a maximum of 20 days in one block or cumulative can be negotiated with your supervisor without ceasing your award and without informing the Administrative Officer (Scholarships) and Research Degrees Committee. You and your supervisor must maintain a written record of any such agreement. This kind of leave should be taken, keeping in mind that your PhD or Masters milestone dates will not be adjusted and satisfactory progress must be maintained. Periods of leave greater than 20 days, must be applied for to Research Degrees Committee on the Leave of Absence form.

Please note that Leave of Absence, including any leave taken in consultation with your supervisor that is less than 20 days, will not be grounds for an extension of scholarship. All leave must be managed so that it has no adverse impact on the satisfactory completion of your PhD milestones. If this will not be the case, then please apply for unpaid leave of absence and suspension of your scholarship using the Leave of Absence form.

Leave Forms are accessible via the Research Forms portal in QUT Virtual:  
<https://qutvirtual.qut.edu.au/>

- 8.5.2 Students will receive additional paid sick leave of up to a total of 12 weeks during the duration of the APA for periods of illness lasting longer than ten days for which a medical certificate has been provided.
- 8.5.3 Sick leave entitlements (including additional sick leave) may also be used to cover leave for students with family caring responsibilities.
- 8.5.4 Students who have completed 12 months of their APA are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks paid maternity leave during the duration of the APA. Paid leave may also be approved for adoption by the awardee.
- 8.5.5 Students who are partners of women giving birth and who have completed 12 months of their APA, may be entitled to a period of paid parenting leave at the time of the birth. Paid leave may also be approved for the partners of women who adopt a child. Eligible awardees will be entitled to five (5) days paid parental leave. Periods of paid parenting leave are in addition to the normal duration of the APA. APA holders who have not completed twelve months of their award may access unpaid parenting leave through the suspension provisions.

Scholarship holders who become primary carer of a new child and would like to have a long-term parental leave may access the normal suspension provisions.

Scholarship holders are not allowed to have both maternity and parental leave at the same time.

Applications for any paid additional sick leave or maternity or paternity leave must be made on the Leave form, to Research Degrees Committee and must be accompanied by a medical certificate or similar evidence.

Leave Forms are accessible via the Research Forms portal in QUT Virtual:  
<https://qutvirtual.qut.edu.au/>

## 8.6 Employment

- 8.6.1 The holder of a full-time scholarship is required to commit to their course of study not less than 30 hours per week, during the normal working week. An award holder, with the approval of the Head of School in which the course of study is being undertaken (following the advice of the principal supervisor), may engage in a limited amount of part-time employment provided that such employment does not interfere with the course of study.

The supervisor will report on the amount of part-time employment during the normal working week, in the annual progress report. There is no limit on how much income an award holder can receive from part-time work, which is not the research topic. However, this income will not be tax exempt. QUT reserves the right to terminate the award of any recipient whose progress, as a result of additional work undertaken, is not satisfactory.

- 8.6.2 QUT shall not require an award holder to render any service to the University, either during the tenure of the award or upon its completion, as a condition of receipt of the award.

## 9 External research

- 9.1 An award holder may seek approval from Research Degrees Committee to conduct up to 12 months of their research either elsewhere in Australia or overseas. Periods of less than one month must be approved by the principal supervisor and head of school but do not need to be approved by Research Degrees Committee.

Approval may be granted under Reg 8 of the PhD Regulations.

*If the student suspends a scholarship whilst they study overseas and remains enrolled at QUT, then any period of study undertaken will be deducted from the maximum period of tenure.(see section 7.2.2 above.)*

Doctor of Philosophy candidates, where the confirmation of candidature will fall due during the period of leave, must successfully undertake the confirmation of candidature process and receive advice from Research Degrees Committee of their confirmation of registration in the Doctor of Philosophy program prior to their departure from Australia.

For students undertaking masters by research, approval to undertake research outside Australia will be given only in exceptional circumstances.

Leave Forms are accessible via the Research Forms portal in QUT Virtual:

<https://qutvirtual.qut.edu.au/>

- 9.2 Subject to the provisions of the appropriate course requirements an award holder may seek approval from Research Degrees Committee to conduct the research at a sponsoring establishment outside the higher education system. A Memorandum of Understanding is required with the sponsoring establishment and can be obtained from the Research Students Centre web page: <http://www.rsc.qut.edu.au/future/apply/external.jsp>

## 10 Termination of award

- 10.1 Research Degrees Committee may terminate an award if:

- (i) after due enquiry, it concludes that the candidate has not satisfied the eligibility criteria; or
- (ii) after consulting a candidate's supervisors and having taken account of all relevant circumstances, the Committee is of the opinion that:
  - 1. the candidate has either effectively discontinued his/her studies; or
  - 2. is making unsatisfactory progress (note: the APA holder must submit the annual progress reports required for candidature reporting) in the course of study; or
  - 3. the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of the award, and no suitable alternative arrangements can be made for continuation of the postgraduate degree; or
  - 4. the student has committed serious misconduct, including, but not limited to the provision of false or misleading information in terms of 10.3; or
  - 5. the necessary prior approval for a period of absence has not been obtained
- (iii) if the APA holder does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of suspension, or does not make arrangements to extend that period of suspension; or

- (iv) when the student ceases to be a full-time student and approval has not been obtained to hold the APA on a part-time basis; or
  - (v) on completion of the course, or the death, incapacity, resignation or withdrawal of the student; or
  - (vi) if the award holder accepts another equivalent award, scholarship or salary to undertake their research higher degree providing a benefit greater than 75% of the base APA stipend rate.
- 10.2 If an APA is terminated, it cannot be re-activated unless the termination occurred in error. The award shall terminate when the thesis is submitted or at the end of the scholarship whichever is earlier.
- 10.3 Provision of False Information

If a student in receipt of an APA has provided false or misleading information, then the entitlement for the award will be reassessed and DEEWR will be notified. If the offence is of a criminal nature, the matter will be referred to the QLD Police.

## ATTACHMENT 1

### Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)

#### Value of awards for 2008

##### Stipend

The full-time stipend is **\$20,007** per annum tax exempt and indexed annually.

Standard stipend for part-time is **\$10,710** indexed annually but is taxable.

##### Relocation allowance

(Applicable where the student must move between cities to take up the award. The maximum level of reimbursement for the sum of both travel and removal expenses is **\$1,455**.)

- **travel expenses reimbursement** equivalent to the cheapest airfare to Brisbane for holder, spouse and dependants.

Proof of purchase and boarding passes must be provided.

Where a student elects to travel by car, they will receive a per kilometre allowance up to the equivalent airfare costs. Students cannot claim for accommodation or meal costs if they elect to travel by car. Please note the maximum allowable for both travel and removals.

- **removal expenses reimbursement** of up to \$505 per adult and \$255 per child with a maximum of \$1,455 for both travel and removals (on production of receipts).

##### Thesis allowance

\$420 for Masters by Research thesis

\$840 for PhD thesis

This allowance can be claimed after submission of the thesis and on production of receipts.

Claims must be made within two years of termination of the award and within twelve months of submission of the thesis. Claims are allowed for costs associated with the production of the thesis and not for goods which will endure past the production stage such as hardware and software.

Please provide your original receipts (please keep a copy yourself) and a Supplier Maintenance Form to the Research Students Centre, for the reimbursement of these allowable expenses as a payment into your bank account. The Supplier Maintenance form can be downloaded from:

[http://www.rsc.qut.edu.au/future/scholarships/other\\_info\\_&\\_forms.jsp](http://www.rsc.qut.edu.au/future/scholarships/other_info_&_forms.jsp)

##### Research Training Scheme (HECS Exemption)

Award holders will normally be allocated a Research Training Scheme (tuition fee entitlement) for up to four years for a PhD or Professional Doctoral degree and up to two years for a Masters by Research degree.

Please note that it is QUT's expectation, that with an appropriately scoped project and consistent effort, scholarship holders will complete their work and submit theses for external examination within a three year timeframe.

Queries can be directed to Research Students Centre on 07 3138 5306.