Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences

Faculty Postgraduate Research Scholarship (FPRS)

Conditions of Award 2013

1 Eligibility

1.1 General

Faculty Postgraduate Research Scholarship (FPRS) are offered for full-time research at postgraduate level for study in the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences. Awards are available to applicants intending to undertake, or who are currently enrolled for a research master’s degree, PhD or research professional doctorate.

Awardees must hold an Australian or New Zealand bachelor’s degree with first class honours or qualifications and/or research experience deemed equivalent by the University.

Awards will not be available to those who:
- would be entitled to a maximum tenure of less than 12 months as a result of prior candidature and/or prior scholarship (see section 2.1).

1.2 Faculty Postgraduate Research Scholarship (FPRS)

Australian citizens, permanent residents and international candidates are eligible for these awards.

Awards will not be available to those who:
- have already completed a PhD or research professional doctorate or equivalent, unless the proposed research area for the second PhD or professional doctorate is significantly different to the prior PhD or professional doctorate;
- have already completed a research master’s degree or equivalent, unless intending to undertake a PhD or research professional doctorate (i.e. a scholarship holder cannot hold an award for a second research master’s degree);
- have previously held a MGS for more than six months. An exception may be made for a PhD or research professional doctorate candidate where the prior award was for a master’s degree;
- are enrolled or are intending to enrol as a research candidate under Monash’s external mode regulations.

2 Duration and conversion of award

2.1 Duration of award

The maximum duration of a full-time award is three years for PhD or research professional doctorate studies and two years for master’s studies.

The duration of an award will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the award.

A doctoral candidate making satisfactory progress may apply for a maximum extension of up to six months. An extension will only be approved where research has been delayed by circumstances beyond the candidate’s control and where such delays could not have been reasonably anticipated at the commencement of candidature. The grounds for an extension must be related to study and not of a personal nature. Master’s candidates are not entitled to an extension.

The award should be taken up by 31 March (end of year round) or 30 September (mid-year round) of the year for which the offer is made. Where employment commitments or circumstances beyond the awardee’s control prevent an awardee from taking up the scholarship by this date, the holder may be permitted to commence the course/scholarship later, but must begin by 30 June (end of year round) or 31 December (mid-year round), or the offer will be withdrawn. Formal approval for a late start must be sought from the Graduate Research Committee.

The earliest date a scholarship can be taken up is 1 January (end of year round) and 1 August (mid-year round) of the year for which the offer is made.

The duration of an award will be increased by any periods of approved paid maternity leave, additional sick leave, parental leave and leave for jury duty.

Tenure is always subject to satisfactory progress and terminates upon withdrawal from the course of study, completion of the prescribed course of study, or on the submission of a thesis for examination.
2.2 Conversion between master’s and doctoral studies

If a master’s candidate is permitted to upgrade candidature to a PhD or research professional doctorate the award, upon application by the holder (and prior to its termination) will be extended to the maximum duration for a doctoral degree. Similarly a PhD or research professional doctorate award may be converted to a master’s research award in circumstances deemed appropriate by the Graduate Research Committee. The maximum duration then becomes that for the new research degree minus periods of study undertaken towards the related degree prior to the conversion.

An awardee completing a master’s degree may continue on his/her scholarship for doctoral studies (for the total maximum period allowed i.e. 3.5 years including the period of support while a master’s candidate) provided there is no interval between master’s and doctoral candidature, or that such interval is covered by suspension of the scholarship. As a scholarship expires on submission of a thesis for examination, the awardee must ensure that the progression to a doctorate or suspension of the scholarship is arranged before the master’s studies are completed.

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

3 Stipend and allowances

3.1 Stipend

The FPRS currently carries an annual full-time stipend of $A24,653 (2013 rate). The FPRS stipend rate is indexed in line with the APA/MGS rate.

Payments are made in fortnightly instalments into an Australian bank account in the awardee’s name. Where an awardee is not enrolled over the full period of the year, the awardee will receive the proportion of the annual stipend for the period in which study is undertaken for that year.

Under Australian Taxation Law full-time awards are presently considered to be non-taxable by the Australian Government. Nevertheless, the University cannot give advice regarding taxation and it is the responsibility of individual awardees to seek their own taxation advice.

Scholarship holders are permitted to:

- obtain funds for fieldwork, equipment or other expenses not covered by the award;
- obtain funding for overseas travel costs from other Australian Government awards or any other source;
- receive income derived from part-time work within the guidelines set by the University (see 5 Employment below); and
- receive a concurrent award, scholarship or salary to undertake their research provided that:
  - the concurrent award, scholarship or salary provides a benefit less than 75% of the FPRS stipend rate; or
  - the FPRS is suspended for the tenure of the concurrent award, scholarship or salary and the period of study undertaken towards the degree during suspension is deducted from the maximum period of tenure.

3.2 Establishment/relocation allowance

From 2013, awardees who relocate their place of residence to Victoria from interstate or overseas to take up their scholarship will be eligible for an establishment/relocation allowance of A$1,000.

The establishment/relocation allowance will not be paid to awardees who relocated to Victoria prior to the offer of the award or to awardees who relocate their place of residence to another residence within Victoria.

3.3 Thesis allowance

Subject to the production of original receipts/tax invoices, awardees may claim reimbursement of up to $A420 (2013 rate) for a master’s thesis and up to $A840 (2013 rate) for a PhD or research professional doctorate thesis towards the cost of thesis preparation. 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 allowance must be claimed within six months of submission of the thesis for examination. Original receipts/tax invoices must be supplied. At time of making the claim, the original receipts/tax invoices cannot be more than six months old.

A thesis allowance is also payable for costs associated with the re-submission of a thesis or lodgement of hard-bound and digital copies of the thesis following notification that the awardee has met the requirements of the degree. The allowance must be claimed within one year of re-submission or lodgement of hard-bound copies.

The combined total of allowances for submission, re-submission or lodgement of hard-bound copies must not exceed the maximum amounts specified above.
4 Leave entitlements

4.1 Annual leave
Awardees are entitled to 20 days paid recreation leave a year, calculated on a pro rata basis. Leave must be taken during the tenure of the award (i.e. the awardee cannot extend the award by taking leave entitlement after the due termination date and there is no payment in lieu on termination). The supervisor’s agreement must be obtained before leave is taken and the academic unit must be notified. The maximum amount of annual leave that may be accumulated before it is taken in part or full is 30 days. Accumulated leave in excess of 30 days will be relinquished. There is no provision for recreation leave loading.

4.2 Sick leave
Awardees are entitled to ten days of sick leave each year of the award, calculated on a pro-rata basis. Sick leave may be accrued over the tenure of the award.

An awardee may have an additional entitlement of up to 12 weeks of paid sick leave within the tenure of the award. An award may be extended to compensate for periods longer than two weeks if a medical certificate is provided by the awardee. Applications for sick leave must be made during the period of sick leave or no later than two weeks after the awardee has returned to study.

Sick leave entitlements (including additional sick leave) may also be used to cover leave for awardees with family carer responsibilities.

4.3 Maternity leave
An awardee may have an entitlement of up to 12 weeks paid maternity leave within the tenure of the award. Paid maternity leave may not be taken within the first 12 months of the award. Periods of paid maternity leave are in addition to the normal duration of the award. Paid maternity leave is to be taken within the period commencing six weeks prior to the expected date of birth of the child and should conclude no later than 12 weeks after the actual date of birth of the child.

Awardees may apply for an additional 40 weeks of unpaid maternity leave over the duration of their scholarship. Maternity leave is a separate leave entitlement and will not diminish an awardee’s entitlement for intermission or sick leave from their candidature/scholarship. Any periods of approved maternity leave will be reflected in a variation to the end date of candidature/scholarship.

4.4 Parental leave
An awardee who is a partner of a woman giving birth may have an entitlement of up to five days paid parental leave within the tenure of the award. Paid parental leave may not be taken within the first 12 months of the award. Periods of paid parental leave are in addition to the normal duration of the award. Paid parental leave is to be taken within one week of the expected date of birth of the child and should conclude no later than six weeks after the birth of the child.

Awardees may apply for an additional 51 weeks of unpaid parental leave over the duration of their scholarship. Unpaid parental leave is to be taken within one week of the expected date of birth of the child and should conclude no later than 12 months after the commencement of leave. Parental leave is a separate leave entitlement and will not diminish an awardee’s entitlement for intermission or sick leave from their candidature/scholarship. Any periods of approved parental leave will be reflected in a variation to the end date of candidature/scholarship.

4.5 Leave for jury duty
Awardees empanelled for jury service for a period longer than five days have an entitlement of up to 12 weeks of paid leave for jury duty within the tenure of the award. Awardees for whom a period of empanelment beyond 12 weeks would represent financial hardship are encouraged to explore options for being exempted before accepting a call for jury service. Payments received for jury service attendance does not reduce the awardee’s scholarship payments. Awardees should however, seek advice from the Australian Tax Office (ATO) regarding any personal tax implications. Periods of paid leave for jury duty are in addition to the normal duration of the award.

5 Employment
An award holder is permitted, with the approval of his/her main supervisor, to undertake a strictly limited amount of paid employment throughout the year, being no more than 15 hours of work on average in any one week. Up to a maximum of six hours only on average of this employment may be undertaken during normal working hours (9 am – 5 pm Monday to Friday). However, this may be extended to a maximum of eight hours if the employment is limited to one weekday.

The candidate’s supervisor/s must be satisfied that any part-time work undertaken does not interfere with the candidate’s study program and progress.
International awardees need to be aware that the employment restrictions outlined above apply even though a student visa permits candidates to work more hours per week.

There is no limit on how much income an awardee can receive from part-time work.

An awardee currently employed at Monash cannot be on a fractional appointment exceeding 0.4.

6 Residency
Awardees are required to reside within daily commuting distance to a Victorian campus to allow frequent and systematic use of the University's facilities, including use of physical resources, formal research training and daily face-to-face contact with supervisors if required (unless awarded an APA for external studies). If the research program requires study away from the University for protracted lengths of time, the same conditions as Study Away from Monash will apply.

7 Studying away from the University
Written permission must be obtained from the Graduate Research Committee to pursue research overseas for any period of time, or to pursue research at a site other than a candidates approved study location for periods greater than six weeks duration.

Study away will only be approved where the proposed travel is an integral part of the research program. In the case of doctoral candidates a maximum period of 12 months study away may be approved, although in exceptional circumstances this may be extended to 18 months. In the case of master’s candidates a maximum period of six months study away may be approved. At all other times, awardees are expected to reside at a location that will allow daily attendance on-campus. Candidates will not generally be allowed to undertake study away in the first six months of candidature.

8 Other courses
An award holder (whether enrolled full-time or part-time), may not engage concurrently in any academic course of study leading to a qualification which is not an essential part of the award holder's postgraduate program.

9 Suspension
An awardee may normally apply for suspension or suspensions of scholarship for up to 12 months. Suspensions in the first six months of scholarship tenure will not normally be approved.

The maximum period of intermission that will be approved at any one time is 12 months. In special circumstances, an awardee may apply to the Graduate Research Committee Steering Committee for suspension beyond an accumulated total of 12 months.

The total period of suspension is normally added to the original scholarship tenure. However, periods of study undertaken towards the degree during suspension of the award will be deducted from the maximum period of tenure.

An award will be terminated if the awardee does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of suspension or fails to make arrangements to extend that period of suspension.

10 Penalties
The Graduate Research Committee will impose penalties for non-compliance with scholarship conditions. This may include for example, suspension of award and/or a reduction in the maximum tenure of the award.

11 Termination
The award will be terminated on the day the thesis is submitted for examination or at the end of the award; whichever is earlier. It is the awardee’s responsibility to advise the Faculty of MNHS if the thesis is submitted for examination prior to the expiration of the award.

Awards will be terminated before this time:
• if, in the opinion of the institution, 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 degree;
• if it is determined that the awardee has not fulfilled his/her obligations, has not met the eligibility criteria or fails to maintain satisfactory progress;
• when the awardee ceases to be a full-time student engaged in full-time research;
• on completion of the course, or the death, incapacity, resignation or withdrawal of the student;
• if the awardee has been found guilty of academic misconduct;
• if the awardee does not resume study at the end of a period of approved leave (for example suspension, personal leave etc), or does not make arrangements to extend the period of approved leave;
if the awardee does not resume study at Monash after a period of study away from the University or does not make arrangements to extend that period of study away;
• if the awardee accepts another equivalent award, scholarship or salary to undertake his/her research degree providing a benefit greater than 75% of the FPRS rate and does not comply with the criteria as outlined in section 3.1;
• if the awardee’s probationary candidature is not confirmed;
• if the awardee converts to writing up away;
• if the awardee fails to maintain their enrolment or fails to re-enrol.

If a scholarship is terminated, it cannot be re-activated unless the termination occurred in error.

12 Monash’s obligations to awardee

12.1 Supervision
A code of practice for supervision of doctoral and research master’s candidates has been drawn up by the Graduate Research Committee in consultation with the Monash Postgraduate Association (refer to Chapter 5.2 of the Handbook for Doctoral Degrees and Handbook for Research Master’s Degrees available from www.monash.edu.au/migr/research-degrees/handbook/).

12.2 Right of appeal
Awardees have the right of appeal against decisions made in relation to the tenure of the award. Such mechanisms are in place and an awardee should consult with the supervisor or head of the academic unit in the first instance.

12.3 Entitlements
All entitlements under the award will be payable to the award holder.

12.4 Facilities
Awardees have adequate facilities to undertake the proposed research program.

13 Award holder’s contract with the University

13.1 Pursuit of research program
The awardee shall diligently and to the best of his/her ability apply himself/herself to the successful completion of the degree.

13.2 Ethics and Occupational Health and Safety guidelines
The awardee shall abide by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) codes on human and animal experimentation, the Australian Government’s Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee, and rulings of the relevant university safety and ethics committees.

13.3 Regulations and statutes

With specific reference to the postgraduate award the awardee must notify the Graduate Research Committee of:
• an intention to leave Australia for reasons other than approved annual leave;
• discontinuance of studies in the approved postgraduate course;
• submission of a thesis for examination;
• absence for any reason for a period of 14 days or longer from study, except on approved annual leave;
• the award of another Commonwealth or other Government award/or other award offering similar benefits to FPRS.

13.4 Research evaluation project
The University is required to ensure that candidates and their supervisors are available to contribute to and participate in, any Australian Government Research Evaluation Program (REP) exercise relating to their projects during, and for a reasonable period after the conclusion of their project.

13.5 Acknowledgments, publications & publicity
Subject to commercial sensitivities or intellectual property considerations, the outcomes of research projects are expected to be communicated to the research community and, where appropriate and possible, to the community at large.

13.6 Scholarship overpayment
An awardee is required to repay scholarship overpayments within 30 days of being requested to do so by the University.
13.7 **On-line questionnaire**
Completion of the On-line questionnaire is compulsory for all candidates who are currently enrolled in a research program and is a pre-requisite for candidature re-enrolment in the following year.

14 **Transfer of FPRS**
A FPRS award cannot be transferred to another faculty or institution.

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**STUDENT AGREEMENT**

I have read these conditions carefully and agree to abide by them and any subsequent amendments which may be made during the tenure of my award.

Name:

Signature: __________________________  Date: ________________