



2026 First Nations Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship Terms and Conditions of Award

1. Introduction

These terms and conditions apply to students who have been awarded a First Nations Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship and will be commencing a graduate research degree at Deakin University in 2026. 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.
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

This means a person:

- is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent; and
- identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; and
- is accepted as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by 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 this scholarship (the Awardee) 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.

Any request for part-time or off-campus enrolment must be formally endorsed by the student's supervisor, subsequently approved by the Graduate Researcher Coordinators within the respective school, and ultimately authorised by the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Researcher Development Academy.

Awardees are required to commence study within six months of the 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 2026 annual stipend rate is \$53,608 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 related 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 Academy.

(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 2026 is \$37,000 to \$46,400 per year.

(v) Overpayments

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 overpaid amount within a reasonable period of time, typically no longer than the duration of the overpayment, 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.

Overpaid stipend or unpaid tuition fees may result in an encumbrance being placed on the awardee's student record. Depending on the type of encumbrance applied to the awardee's student record, it may block access to a range of important services such as results release, enrolment, and graduation.

When an encumbrance is applied, the awardee will be advised by email of the reason for the encumbrance and the steps required to have the encumbrance removed.

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 visas, 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.

Reimbursement for relocation expenses will be provided based on the actual costs incurred by the student and any eligible accompanying family members, subject to the following individual limits:

- \$500 per eligible adult
- \$250 per eligible child

Only the cost of one journey can be claimed, and it must be submitted as one consolidated claim. Claims will be assessed on a family unit basis, and the total reimbursement payable will be the lesser of:

- The total actual amount spent on eligible relocation expenses, and
- The combined family relocation limit, calculated according to the number of eligible adults and children, up to a maximum of \$1,500.

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

- have commenced their 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

The Australian Government Research Training Program scholarship 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 withdraws from the program;
- 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 with appropriate study rights.

8. Employment

An Awardee is permitted to undertake a maximum of six hours per week part-time employment, provided the work does not interfere with the progress of the research degree program. In the case of international students, this is subject to compliance with the conditions of their visa. Approval must be sought for periods of part-time work amounting to more than six hours per week. The School or the Institute Graduate Research Coordinator 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 entitlement

(i) 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.

(ii) 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.

(iii) 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.

Sick leave entitlements can also be used by students who have caring responsibilities for their immediate family. A medical certificate is required for carer's leave if it exceeds three consecutive working days, or if absences of fewer than three days but total more than five working days in any academic year.

Absences due to sick leave of less than two weeks, which are not considered to interfere with the Awardee's progress, must be negotiated with the principal supervisor.

(iv) Additional Sick Leave

An Awardee may be entitled to receive additional paid sick leave where a medical certificate can be provided, and compelling and compassionate grounds can be established.

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 Academy may approve the accrual of any part of the paid sick leave entitlement in advance of when that leave entitlement would otherwise accrue.

Additional paid sick leave may also be used to cover leave for students with caring responsibilities for immediate family*. A medical certificate is required for absences, and student must submit their intermission request online. 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.

* "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 person has caring responsibilities arising from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship relationship of equivalent status to those listed above.

Students taking additional sick leave (including paid and unpaid) must notify Deakin's Researcher Development Academy no less than 14 days prior to the approved date of return. Failure to do so may result in payments being delayed, suspended, or terminated.

(iv) 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.

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 will receive 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.

Awardees who are partners of those giving birth or adopting while receiving the Award stipend, and have completed 12 months of their Award, may be entitled to a maximum of one week's paid leave at the time of the birth.

Paid parental leave can be approved no earlier than four weeks before the expected due date, and a medical certificate is required for approval.

Any parental leave claim must be accompanied by one of:

- a. a medical certificate indicating when the student is due to give birth
- b. a birth certificate for the child
- c. a statutory declaration from the student that they are the parent of the child, or have accepted primary responsibility for the ongoing care of the 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.

Students undertaking parental leave (including paid and unpaid) must notify Deakin's Researcher Development Academy no less than 14 days prior to the approved date of return. Failure to do so may result in payments being delayed, suspended, or terminated.

(v) Overpayment during unpaid leave

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 either be automatically recovered in full upon return from leave, or the student will be invoiced for payment.

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 School/Institute Graduate Research Coordinator. 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 Academy 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 considered 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 degree.

13. Specific obligations of Awardees

Awardees must:

- diligently, and to the best of their ability, apply themselves to the successful completion of their degree, and provide all reports required by the University;
- comply with all statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures (including disciplinary provisions) of the University;
- comply with any additional conditions set out in the Letter of Offer of Candidature and Scholarship;
- advise their Supervisor, School/Institute Graduate Research Coordinator, and Deakin's Research Development Academy as soon as reasonably possible of any change in circumstances that may affect the Awardee's eligibility to continue to receive the award or impact their enrollment.
- acknowledge the Australian Government's support in any published materials related to their graduate research project. This relates to any time, both during and after completion of their graduate research degree. Materials include items such as books, articles, newsletters or other literary or artistic works which relate to the graduate research project. The acknowledgement must be in a prominent place and in an appropriate form. The acknowledgement must include the mention of support through an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship and must include the RTP Digital Object Identifier (DOI) doi.org/10.82133/C42F-K220. Example: *This research was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship doi.org/10.82133/C42F-K220.*