



## A Quick Reference Guide for RTP/UPA Holders

This guide is prepared as a reference for domestic students. You should read your Conditions of Award carefully and check them when you have any queries. You should also keep a file on all information pertaining to your award, including the offer letter, *Conditions of Award*, and any related correspondence and documents.

### **Advanced Standing**

If you have already commenced candidature towards the degree, or your candidature has been upgraded from a Research Masters to a Research Doctorate before you receive an RTP/UPA, all such periods of enrolment will be deducted from the maximum tenure of your award. The Scholarships and Financial Support Service (SFSS) will confirm the period of advanced standing in writing after you have commenced your award.

### **Candidature Details**

You must notify the [Higher Degree by Research Administration Centre \(HDRAC\)](#) promptly of any planned changes in your candidature such as change of department, change of attendance pattern, suspension, leave of absence, withdrawal, course transfer, and candidature upgrade or downgrade. If the award holder does not provide notice of the changes identified above, the University may require repayment of any overpaid stipend.

### **Scholarship Commencement Date**

This is the date that your Head of Department states on your Scholarships Commencement Form to indicate that you are enrolled in the Department and have commenced full-time research. If you have enrolled in the degree prior the award, please note that the RTP/UPA payments can only commence from the first day of award (refer to your offer letter for the earliest scholarship commencement date).

If you are commencing your candidature, your candidature commencement date, as recorded by the University, is the earliest possible date for commencement of RTP/UPA payments.

### **Commencement of Payments**

To formally accept the award you must return a signed copy of both pages of the *Conditions of Award* to SFSS. To commence payments you must enrol in the degree and provide SFSS with a completed [Scholarships Commencement Form](#). You also need to log into your [Sydney Student portal](#) and enter your bank details under the My Finance tab. Your commencement will not be processed until your bank details have been entered.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

To view a list of frequently asked questions for current scholarship recipients, visit the FAQ page at <http://sydney.edu.au/scholarships/research/faq.shtml>

### **Forms**

Forms for research scholarship recipients can be downloaded from [http://sydney.edu.au/scholarships/research/psa\\_forms.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/scholarships/research/psa_forms.shtml). All the forms referred to in this quick reference guide can be obtained from this website.

### **Higher Degree by Research Administration Centre**

Opening hours: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Phone: 1800 SYD UNI (1800 793 864)

Website: <http://sydney.edu.au/hdr-admin>

Email: [hdrac.scholarships@sydney.edu.au](mailto:hdrac.scholarships@sydney.edu.au)

Location: Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building (G02), alongside the Student Centre

### **Maternity Leave**

A maximum of twelve weeks during the tenure of the award, after you have completed twelve months of your award. An application supported by a medical certificate, must be submitted to [HDRAC](#) at least four weeks prior to the expected date of confinement. You must apply to change your enrolment status

to one of 'paid leave' which means that you remain enrolled and therefore eligible to receive scholarship payments, but you do not consume your RTP entitlement for this period. Paid maternity leave is not available during the first twelve months of an award although unpaid leave can be accessed through the suspension provisions. To apply for maternity leave, contact [HDRAC](#).

### **Part-time Employment**

Award holders are permitted to undertake up to 20 hours of part-time work per week (evening, weekend and holiday work included) if not employed by the University. If employed by the University, the appointment must not exceed half time or 50% of a full-time position. Work must not interfere with your research and progress. Income from part-time work will not be tax-exempt.

### **Part-time Study**

Only permitted for students with significant caring commitment, a medical condition or a disability which limits their capacity to undertake full-time study. You must apply to [HDRAC](#) with an accompanying supporting letter from your supervisor. Evidence of your carer commitments, medical condition or disability must be attached and if applicable, details of childcare arrangements and any part-time employment. Stipends are NOT tax-exempt for part-time award holders who may undertake part-time employment up to a maximum of 10 hours per week (half the 20-hour limit for full-time award holders). Part-time stipends are paid at 50% of the full-time rate.

### **Relocation Allowances (VCRS and RTPs only)**

RTP holders relocating their place of residence to Sydney in order to take up the RTP may be eligible for the relocation allowance in accordance with the University's RTP Relocation Allowance Policy (see [http://sydney.edu.au/scholarships/research/psa\\_forms.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/scholarships/research/psa_forms.shtml)). The value of the allowance is up to \$515 for each eligible adult and \$255 for each eligible child. The absolute maximum value of relocation expenses that a student may receive is \$1,485. The amount for VCRS holders is up to \$5,000 and includes any eligible claims under the RTP.

### **Research Overseas**

Award holders may undertake up to 12 months (18 months for students of Anthropology and other special cases) of their research overseas. However, students may not normally conduct research overseas within the first six months of an award.

You need the approval of your supervisor and Head of Department on the *Application to Hold Postgraduate Award Overseas* form. Permission will only be granted if the research is essential to the completion of your degree. Students must remain enrolled at the University and receive approval to count time away from their Faculty. Progress reports must be submitted to the University at three-month intervals during the period overseas. To apply to hold your postgraduate award overseas, contact [HDRAC](#).

### **Scholarships and Financial Support Service**

Opening hours: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Phone: 1800 SYD UNI (1800 793 864)

Website: <http://sydney.edu.au/scholarships/>

Email: [hdrac.scholarships@sydney.edu.au](mailto:hdrac.scholarships@sydney.edu.au)

Location: Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building (G02)

### **Sick Leave**

Up to 10 working days sick leave each year and this may be accrued over the tenure of the award. Students with family responsibilities, caring for sick children or relatives, may convert up to five days of their annual sick leave entitlement to carers leave on presentation of medical certificate/s. Students taking sick leave must inform their supervisor as soon as practicable. Students may receive additional paid sick leave of up to a total of 12 weeks for medically substantiated periods of illness where the student has insufficient sick leave entitlement as described at the beginning of this paragraph. You should apply to change your enrolment status to one of 'paid leave' for paid sick leave periods. This means that you remain enrolled and therefore eligible to receive scholarship payments, but you do not consume your RTS entitlement for this period. To apply for sick leave, contact [HDRAC](#).

### **Stipend**

Full-time awards are tax-exempt. Part-time awards are NOT exempt from taxation. The rates are indexed annually on 1 January. Refer to your scholarship offer notification for rate information.

## **Suspensions**

You cannot suspend your award within the first six months. After that, you may apply for up to 12 months suspension during the award period. You must submit a *Research Scholarship Suspension Form*, approved by your Supervisor and Head of Department, to [HDRAC](#) at least two weeks prior to start of the intended suspension. You must also suspend your candidature (or apply for leave of absence) as periods of study undertaken towards the degree during suspension of the award will be counted as advanced standing and deducted from the maximum period of award tenure. To apply for a suspension, contact [HDRAC](#).

## **Tenure of Award and Application for Extension (PhD students only)**

Research Masters: up to two years, no extensions are possible.

Research Doctorate: up to three years with the possibility of an extension of up to six months subject to satisfactory progress, provided the grounds are related to study, are beyond the control of the student and are not of a personal nature. To apply for an extension, contact [HDRAC](#).

## **Termination**

The award will be terminated upon submission of the thesis or at the end of the award, whichever is earlier. Awards will be terminated before this time if: you have not carried out the course of study with competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of the award; fail to maintain satisfactory progress; or have committed serious misconduct. Stipend payment will need to be suspended throughout the duration of the enquiry/appeal process.

## **Thesis Allowance**

Reimbursement of up to \$420 for Masters candidates and up to \$840 for Doctoral candidates will be made for eligible claims for direct costs of producing a thesis in accordance with the University's thesis allowance policy. The claim must be submitted to [HDRAC](#) within one year of submission of the thesis and no more than two years after termination of the award.

## **Top-up Scholarships**

Award holders may receive a concurrent award or scholarship from other sources to undertake their research higher degree if such award or scholarship provides a benefit less than 75% of the base RTP/UPA stipend rate. The RTP/UPA will be terminated if this limit is exceeded.

## **Transfer (RTPs only)**

RTPs are allocated to universities based on their research performance and students who change from one university to another may continue to receive their RTP only if their new university agrees to its continuation and subject to the new university having RTP grant amounts available.