

Swinburne Research

A Guide for
Swinburne University Vice Chancellor's
Research Scholarship
(VCRS) holders



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SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY

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1 Introduction

This guide is intended as a short guide to entitlements and requirements for new Swinburne University Vice Chancellor's Research Scholarship (VCRS) students. Further information can be sought from Swinburne Research (see the section at the end of this guide for contact details).

2 How to apply

To apply for a VCRS complete the *Application for Admission to Research Higher Degree Candidature and Scholarship* form available on the web at <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/research/schols.htm> and select the box for VCRS under the section on scholarships. You also need to send the referee report form (available from the same website) to two referees.

3 Definitions

<i>date of commencement</i>	is usually the date of first enrolment
<i>DIAC</i>	means the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Citizenship. See http://www.immi.gov.au/
<i>HDR</i>	means a Higher Degree by Research that is a Research Doctorate or a Research Masters
<i>HESA</i>	means the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i>
<i>Research Doctorate</i>	has the meaning given in the Australian Qualifications Framework http://www.aqf.edu.au/doctor.htm
<i>Research Masters</i>	has the meaning given in the Australian Qualifications Framework http://www.aqf.edu.au/masters.htm
<i>RTS</i>	means the Commonwealth Government's Research Training Scheme
<i>suspension</i>	in respect of a scholarship, means a period of time during which a scholarship holder is not receiving scholarship payments
<i>University</i>	means Swinburne University of Technology

4 Description of Scholarship

Swinburne University Vice Chancellor's Research Awards (VCRSs) are awarded to students of exceptional research potential undertaking a higher degree by research (HDR). The awards are provided to assist with general living costs. Tuition fees are also covered by the award.

5 Duration of a VCRS

The duration of a full-time VCRS is **three years** for a student undertaking Research Doctorate studies, and **two years** for a student undertaking Research Masters studies. The date of first enrolment is usually the commencement date for the scholarship, however other arrangements are possible. Contact Swinburne Research for further information (see contact details).

The duration of a VCRS will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken:

- towards the degree prior to the commencement of the VCRS; and
- during suspension of the VCRS

The duration of a VCRS will be increased by any periods of leave of absence, paid maternity leave, additional sick leave and parenting leave approved by the University.

Swinburne University may also approve an extension to the duration of a VCRS for a Research Doctorate student of up to six months provided the student is making satisfactory progress and the grounds for the extension are related to study and are beyond the control of the student. Swinburne University will not approve an extension to the duration of a VCRS for a Research Masters student.

To calculate the remaining period of scholarship after conversion of a VCRS from part-time to full-time the period of time already expended is halved.

To calculate the remaining period of scholarship after conversion of a VCRS from full-time to part-time the period of time already expended is doubled.

6 Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for a VCRS, a student:

- may be a domestic or an international student, and
- must 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 these Guidelines; and
- be undertaking a Higher Degree by Research (HDR); and
- be enrolled as a full-time student, unless the University has approved a part-time VCRS for the student under these Guidelines; and
- if undertaking a Research Masters not hold a Research Doctorate or a Research Masters degree awarded by a University or an equivalent degree; and
- must not previously have held an Commonwealth Government-funded postgraduate research scholarship (excluding an Endeavour International Postgraduate Research Scholarship), unless it was terminated within six months of the scholarship's payments commencing; and
- must not be receiving an equivalent award, scholarship or salary providing a benefit greater than 75% of the VCRS stipend rate, to undertake the HDR.

6.1 Equivalent Attainment to Bachelor with First Class Honours

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

7 Approval of a Part-time VCRS

The University may only approve a part-time VCRS for a student if the student is in exceptional circumstances.

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

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

In determining exceptional circumstances when approving a part-time VCRS, the University may 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 student who has been approved for a part-time VCRS may revert to full-time study at any time with the permission of the University.

8 Ongoing Eligibility

Swinburne University monitors students' ongoing eligibility to ensure that the students continue to meet the eligibility requirements set out in these Guidelines including maintaining satisfactory progress.

9 Payments to Students

Swinburne University makes fortnightly payments to students in respect of their annual stipend. Payments may only be made directly to a student's bank account. Payments commence on the date of enrolment and cannot be backdated.

9.1 Value of Scholarships and Indexation Arrangements

The value of an VCRS stipend over the full year in 2009:

- **\$20,427**

9.2 Relocation allowance

The VCRS provides students with an allowance toward the cost of relocating themselves, their spouse and dependants to a new place of residence to enable the student to undertake their HDR.

The maximum relocation allowance which may be received by a student is calculated by allowing:

- \$505** for each eligible adult, and
- \$255** for each eligible child.

The absolute maximum value of relocation expenses that a student may receive is **\$1,455**.

To make a claim for relocation, you will need to present original receipts to the Swinburne Research.

Only costs for air travel, travel by car or removal expenses to the new place of residence are allowable.

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

For the purposes of relocation allowance an eligible adult is either a spouse or adult dependant.

A spouse is a person who is married to or in a de facto relationship with the student.

An adult dependant is a person for whom the student or their spouse has substantial caring responsibilities.

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

- younger than 18 years of age; or
- younger than 25 years of age and undertaking full-time study.

9.3 Thesis allowance

The maximum value of thesis allowance which may be received by a student is:

- \$420** for a Masters thesis, and
- \$840** for a Doctoral thesis.

Swinburne University will make reimbursement payments to students for eligible claims for thesis allowance up to the approved maximum amount specified in these Guidelines.

An eligible claim for thesis allowance is a claim made by a student for the costs of producing a Masters thesis or Doctorate thesis. The claim may include the cost of printing, binding, and proofreading. These costs may include costs associated with the re-submission of a thesis, or the lodgement of bound copies of the thesis following approval.

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 award.

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.

10 Suspensions

Students may apply to Swinburne University for a suspension of their scholarship for up to 12 months. In exceptional circumstances, students may apply for suspension beyond 12 months. The approval of all suspensions will be at the discretion of Swinburne University. Payment of a VCRS scholarship is normally suspended during periods of leave of absence.

11 Transfer of a VCRS

Swinburne University Vice Chancellor's Research Awards are only for study at Swinburne University and are not transferable.

12 Change of Program

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 VCRS.

A student who completes a Research Masters degree may continue to receive their VCRS for a Research Doctorate degree provided there is no interval between the completion of the Research Masters and the commencement of Research Doctorate degree, or that such an interval is covered by suspension of the VCRS.

The duration of the award will change after conversion to that of the new program, i.e.

- conversion from Master to Doctorate – new duration – 3 years
- conversion from Doctorate to Masters – new duration – 2 years
- completion of Masters and enrolment in Doctorate – new duration 3 years

Duration is calculated using the original commencement date in both cases.

13 Leave Entitlements

Students will receive up to 20 days recreation leave and 10 days sick leave for each year of the scholarship. These leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the VCRS but will be forfeited when the VCRS is terminated.

Students will also receive additional paid sick leave of up to a total of 12 weeks during their scholarship for periods of illness lasting longer than ten days for which a medical certificate has been provided.

Sick leave entitlements (including additional sick leave) may also be used to cover leave for students with family caring responsibilities, subject to the usual practice of the University.

Students who have completed 12 months of their scholarship are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks paid maternity leave during the duration of the scholarship.

Students who are partners of women giving birth and who have completed 12 months of their scholarship, may be entitled to a period of paid parenting leave at the time of the birth, subject to the usual practice of the University.

14 Work

VCRSs are awarded for full-time study so it is expected that students would not undertake more than 7 to 8 hours of paid employment per week. Students may undertake extra work with the approval of the University. Swinburne University may not approve a student undertaking work unless it is satisfied that the work will not interfere with the student's study for their HDR or their ability to complete their study within the normal timeframe.

15 Termination of a VCRS

A VCRS will be terminated:

- if the student ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in these Guidelines other than during a period in which the VCRS has been deferred; or
- if, in the opinion of the University, the program of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of the VCRS; or

- if the University determines that a student is guilty of serious academic misconduct; or
- when the student ceases to be a full-time student and when approval has not been obtained from the University to hold the VCRS on a part-time basis; or
- on completion of the program; or
- if the student does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of suspension and has not arranged to extend that period of suspension; or
- if the student fails to maintain satisfactory progress, as determined by the University.

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

16 Supervision and Facilities

Swinburne University will endeavour to:

- ensure that adequate facilities and appropriate supervision are available for each student undertaking a HDR; and
- establish, make publicly available, and abide by, a code of supervisory practice for students undertaking a HDR.

17 Contact details

Staff members in Swinburne Research are always happy to answer any questions you might have. They can be contacted on:

Phone: 9214 5547

Email: ehill@swin.edu.au

Website: <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/research/schols.htm>

Location: Building 60Wm, Level 7, 60 William Street
Hawthorn campus