



OFFICE OF THE DVC (RESEARCH)

Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship (MQRES) Scheme

Priority HDR Scholarship Allocation Plan

Background to the Macquarie University PhD Scholarship Scheme

Since 2001, Macquarie University has centrally funded the Research Awards for Areas and Centres of Excellence (RAACE) and International Macquarie University Research Scholarship (iMURS) schemes. These schemes aimed to expand the support available to researchers and academics working in identified areas of research excellence. The schemes required academic staff from an identified area of research strength within the University to submit an individual Project Proposal Request (PPR) application for each international or domestic research scholarship applicant they wished to sponsor. Project approval to enable the offer of a scholarship was through the DVCR-Research Policy and Management Committee (RPMC).

HDR Scholarship Review and Goal

A review of the RAACE/iMURS scheme has been undertaken in view of the new strategic research direction of the University, and a new scheme has been endorsed by RPMC. The new allocation model is an extension of the PPR strategic distribution without the extensive paperwork and procedures, with funding to increase from 2007. The aim is to maximize the strategic integration of research and research training through a direct allocation of PhD scholarship funding to excellent researchers and the University's targeted concentrations of research excellence (CORE). The replacement allocation scheme has been retitled as the Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship (MQRES) scheme.

The goal of the Research Excellence Scholarship scheme is to ensure that excellent researchers and concentrations of research excellence have the required support to expand their research activity through the availability of centrally funded scholarships for international and domestic HDR candidates.

Externally funded scholarships will continue to be offered under schemes such as the Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) and Endeavour International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (E-IPRS).

New Research Excellence Scholarship allocation plan

Under the Research Excellence Scholarship scheme, from June 2006 scholarship allocations will be made on the basis of four categories as funds are available. In addition to CORE staff, the plan enables academic staff in all areas of the University to access research scholarship funding as Competitive Research Grant awardees, International strategic HDR program participants, Macquarie Research Centre members, distinguished Professors and Macquarie Research Development Grant awardees. Allocations will depend on the available budget.

Divisions are encouraged to use their own funding to provide additional HDR scholarships to support academically qualified research students in other areas of research interest, areas of emerging research excellence or to further expand those areas where allocations have been made.

THE MQ RESEARCH EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP ALLOCATION MODEL

1. MQ research excellence groupings (steeples and pre-steeples)

The first category of the model identifies the University's concentrations of research excellence (CORE 'steeples' and 'pre-steeples') based on a review of research activity across the University:

- 1.1 Concentrations of research excellence (5 steeples x 5 scholarships each p.a.):
 - Ancient Cultures
 - Climate and Plant Ecology
 - Cognitive Science (MACCS)
 - Geochemistry and Mineralogy (GEMOC)
 - Lasers and Photonics[minimum 2 scholarships per new level B+ staff]
- 1.2 Areas of emerging research excellence (4 pre-steeples x 3 scholarships each p.a.):
 - Animal Behaviour
 - Computer and Network Security
 - Proteomics and Genomics
 - Social and Cultural Studies

2. Competitive Research Grant awardees

The second category supports competitive research grant awardees:

- 2.1 National Competitive Grant awardees 2007
[ARC Discovery Large Grant, Linkage, APFs, ARFs, QE11, NHMRC]
- 2.2 Federation Fellows (3 scholarships over 5 years)
- 2.3 Other nationally funded Research Centres

3. International strategic HDR programs

The third category encourages HDR collaboration with international partners to expand our collaborative research profile:

- 3.1 International HDR awardees – E-IPRS stipend
- 3.2 International HDR agreements (e.g. cotutelle, cohort research MOU)

4. MQ Research Development areas

The fourth category supports the University's recognized research centres, distinguished Professors and Research Development Grant staff:

- 4.1 MQ Research Centres
- 4.2 MQ Research Development Grant awardees
- 4.3 Distinguished Professor [E3] or equivalent

Implementation of the Allocation Plan

Scholarships will be allocated over a 2 year cycle (e.g. 2006-07), for a limited term of 6 months in the first instance. If not filled and/or offered, the scholarship will be reallocated unless an extension to the deadline has been approved by RPMC. Requests for an initial 3 month extension will require a supporting case.

The number of allocated scholarships depends on available funding, and will be reviewed as required by the Research Training Panel (RTP) of the RPMC. The RTP, chaired by the Dean HDR, is responsible for MQRES and PGRF award recommendations.

As the 2006 RAACE/iMURS budget has already been committed, initial MQRES places will be limited to 2007 advance allocations. The initial priority allocation will be directed to CORE staff and will assist in the recruitment of new research staff (Scholarship Allocation Model 1.1).

HDR Scholarship Administration

The availability of scholarships under the allocation plan will be notified to the designated CORE staff by HDRU and tracked by the Dean HDR. Once the allocation has been filled, no further applications will be considered until the next round opens (determined by the available scholarship budget). Between rounds Divisions may choose to fund additional scholarships or encourage applicants to apply for other scholarship schemes that are available.

Responsibility for the nomination of Higher Degree Research (HDR) candidates for the award of a scholarship will be devolved to designated academic staff. Designated academic staff may either nominate an eligible applicant for consideration for the award of a scholarship, or request HDRU to advertise scholarship availability, in the approved format, on the HDRU and JASON websites.

The Higher Degree Research Unit (HDRU) will continue to manage the scholarship application process. All nominations and applications will continue to be assessed in the usual manner, i.e. there is no change to the current eligibility requirements (e.g. M3 ranking and above; IELTS 7). The HDRC will approve the scholarship offer and HDRU is responsible for scholarship offers to the successful applicant. The offer of a scholarship will be subject to an assessment that the applicant meets the University's scholarship eligibility requirements.

Interim Procedures

From June 2006 the PPR process for the award of scholarships has been replaced by the above allocation model. Active PPRs lodged prior to June will be handled as follows:

- Approved PPRs will continue to be available until they either expire or are filled.
- PPRs lodged with HDRU but currently unapproved and in a concentration of research excellence will be forwarded to a nominated CORE (steeple/pre-steeple) contact for an MQRES status recommendation.
- PPRs lodged with HDRU but currently unapproved and that do not fall within a designated concentration of research excellence will not be approved and advice will be forwarded to the principal applicant-supervisor.

The introduction of the Scholarship Allocation Plan will affect current HDR RAACE/iMURS scholarship applicants who do not receive a nominated MQRES allocation. Affected applicants will be advised of the alternative availability of the E-IPRS (closing 31 August) and APA (closing 31 October) schemes. Notification regarding the offer of these awards will be made after the HDRC endorses the awardees for E-IPRS (6 November meeting) and APA (4 December meeting).

- Applicants for Semester 2, 2006 candidature commencement and scholarship will be assessed initially for candidature and advised of the outcome. Those accepted for candidature and requesting their scholarship applications transfer to the APA or E-IPRS scholarship assessment round will be sent to Division with these rounds for scholarship only assessment. **Please note that applicants who choose to enrol in Semester 2, 2006 and are successfully awarded a 2007 scholarship will attract advanced standing on their prior enrolment.
- Applicants for Semester 1, 2007 candidature commencement and scholarship will, on their request, be considered for the APA or E-IPRS and will be sent to Division with these rounds for dual candidature consideration and scholarship ranking.