Purpose: The University of Notre Dame Australia’s policy on the award of IPRS Scholarships. To be read in conjunction with the Guidelines for Commonwealth Scholarships

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This document has been derived from, and should be read in conjunction with the Guidelines for Commonwealth Scholarships. Should this document be substantively inconsistent with the Guidelines on any matter, the Guidelines shall have precedence. The Guidelines are available for download from http://www.innovation.gov.au/RESEARCH/RESEARCHBLOCKGRANTS/Pages/InternationalPostgraduateResearchScholarships.aspx

1. CONTEXT

1.1 The International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) program was established by the Commonwealth Government to maintain and develop international research linkages. Its specific aims are to attract top quality international postgraduate students to areas of research strength in the Australian higher education sector and to support Australia's research effort.

1.2 IPRS awards are Commonwealth funded awards made available on a formula basis to eligible Australian higher education institutions for the support of their international research students. Institutions receiving an allocation of IPRS places and are required to award them competitively on the basis of academic merit and in accordance with publicly advertised selection criteria.

1.3 Each IPRS award provides (see Section 4 below) an annual fee remission for the successful applicant, and meets the cost of a standard Overseas Student Health Cover policy for the student and their spouse and dependants (if any), for the period of the IPRS.

1.4 Under the Guidelines for these awards, an IPRS may be awarded only to an international student undertaking a higher degree by research (HDR). In the case of this University, eligible HRD courses currently include:

- the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree
- Research Masters degrees (degrees by research thesis only)
- Professional Doctorates (provided the research component represents at least two-thirds of the defined duration of the course)

2. ELIGIBILITY

2.1 To be eligible for an IPRS, a student must:

- be a citizen of a country other than Australia and New Zealand; and
- meet international student visa requirements as specified by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, including the requirement to purchase and maintain a standard Overseas Student Health Cover policy approved by the Commonwealth Government Department of Health and Ageing; and
- be undertaking a HDR on a full-time basis; and
- be undertaking study in a subject area identified by the University as one of its areas of research concentration; and
- satisfy the University's academic entry requirements for a Research Masters or a Research Doctorate programme (as the case may be), including the English proficiency levels set by the University for its international students.

2.2 Students who currently hold an IPRS at another institution but who have been approved for admission to a HDR courses at The University of Notre Dame Australia may be permitted to have their existing IPRS scholarship transferred to Notre Dame, subject to conditions defined in the Guidelines (see Section 7 below).

2.3 Under the terms of the Guidelines, IPRS awards may not be granted to a student who:

- is eligible for study under the Commonwealth’s Research Training Scheme (RTS) at the commencement of the HDR; or
- is a student for the purposes of the Commonwealth’s Research Training Scheme (RTS); or
already holds a research doctorate degree regarded by the Research Committee to be equivalent to an Australian research doctorate degree; or

- if undertaking a research masters degree, already holds a research masters degree that is regarded by the Research Committee to be equivalent to, or at a higher level than, an Australian research masters degree; or

- has held an Australian Agency for International Development scholarship within the two years prior to the commencement of their IPRS; or

- is already receiving support under any other Commonwealth Government scholarship scheme or any other scholarship scheme to which the Commonwealth Government makes a substantial contribution; or

- has previously received an IPRS for a research doctorate degree; or

- has previously received an IPRS for a research masters degree, unless (a) that degree was completed and the student is undertaking a research doctorate degree, or (b) the student has converted their IPRS under approved conditions (see Section 9 below).

3. APPLICATION PROCESSES

3.1 All applications for the IPRS must be submitted on the University’s official research scholarship application form. This form is available from the University’s Research Office and is available for download from the University’s website. If the applicant is not currently enrolled in the course for which the support is intended, the application for scholarship support must be accompanied by an application for admission to the course.

3.2 Applications for an IPRS scholarship must be lodged with the Research Office or before the closing date indicated in the University’s advertised Call for Applications and as specified on the University’s website.

3.3 Applications will not be considered valid unless all required information and supporting documentation has been provided to the satisfaction of the Research Office.

3.4 Applications from prospective students (whether new or transferring) will not be considered unless the applicant’s eligibility for admission to the nominated course has been confirmed and an offer of a place in the course has been approved by the Dean of the relevant College and the Research Office.

3.5 Following the advertised closing date, all valid applications will be forwarded to the Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee for confirmation of IPRS eligibility, formal merit assessment and competitive ranking.

3.6 Preference will be given to students from the regions identified as priorities under the Commonwealth Government’s IPRS Programme. These regions are Asia, Europe, North and Latin America, and the Middle East.

3.7 The Committee’s merit assessment of an application will include consideration of any or all of the following:

- the applicant’s academic record,
- relevance of the applicant’s prior qualifications to the area of research proposed,
- the applicant’s prior research experience and publications record,
- referees’ reports,
- the ‘fit’ of the applicant’s proposed research to the University’s current research priorities,
- the University’s potential to support the proposed project, and
- the likelihood that the student will complete the degree in regulation time.

3.8 The Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee’s selection proceedings shall be confidential and its decisions final.
3.9 For any given year, the Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee is obliged to offer, if possible, the full number of IPRS scholarships it has been allocated for that year to students who are to commence their HDR in that year.

3.10 The Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee may not offer more IPRS scholarships than it has been allocated for that year, other than in the circumstances specified in the next paragraph.

3.11 Where a student has completed a research Masters degree, was receiving an IPRS in respect of that degree, and is proceeding to a research doctorate degree, the Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee may offer the student an IPRS despite the preceding paragraph. In such cases the student shall be regarded as commencing the IPRS in the year following the actual commencement of the second IPRS.

3.12 The Research Office shall notify, in writing, all applicants of the outcome of their IPRS application.

3.13 Successful applicants will receive from the Research Office a formal Letter of Offer for their IPRS, setting out clearly the specific assistance to which they are entitled, any additional compulsory fees or charges for which the student will be liable, and the conditions of the scholarship.

3.14 Following receipt of written acceptance from the prospective student that the offered IPRS will be taken up, the Research Office will provide the prospective student with a duly authorised Confirmation of Enrolment which meets the requirements of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to enable the student to obtain their student visa to enter Australia. (Important: Such Confirmation of Enrolment shall not be sent until written acceptance of the scholarship offer has been received from the student.)

4. VALUE OF IPRS AWARD

4.1 The maximum value of an IPRS in a year is equal to:

- the estimated annual course cost, as specified in the CRICOS, for the HDR being undertaken by the student; plus
- the cost of a standard Overseas Student Health Cover policy approved by the Commonwealth Government Department of Health and Ageing and which covers the student and their spouse and dependants (if any) for the period of the IPRS.

4.2 The Research Office will use the University's IPRS grant allocation to pay, on behalf of the student, the estimated annual course cost, as specified in CRICOS, for the HDR being undertaken by the IPRS student.

5. THE DURATION OF AN IPRS

5.1 The duration of an IPRS is three years for research doctorate degrees and two years for research masters degrees.

5.2 The duration of an IPRS will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken towards the course of study prior to the commencement of the IPRS; and during deferral of the IPRS.

5.3 The Pro Vice Chancellor - Research may approve extensions to the duration of an IPRS of up to a total of 12 months. The Committee may not approve an extension of longer than six months at any one time.
6. DEFERRAL OF AN IPRS

6.1 A student may apply to the Pro Vice Chancellor - Research for a deferral of their scholarship for up to 12 months. In exceptional circumstances, students may apply for deferrals beyond 12 months. The approval of all deferrals will be at the discretion of the Pro Vice Chancellor - Research.

7. TRANSFER OF AN IPRS

7.1 IPRS students who are approved for transfer to Notre Dame from another university may continue to receive their IPRS, but only if
- Notre Dame and the former university agree to the continuation of the IPRS;
- Notre Dame and the former university agree on the transfer arrangements; and
- Notre Dame is satisfied that it has received full information from the former university on any IPRS payment the student has received.

8. CHANGE OF DEGREES

8.1 IPRS students may be permitted, subject to the relevant course regulations and admission criteria, to 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 IPRS.

9. CHANGE OF RESEARCH AREA

9.1 The Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee may approve an IPRS student's request to change from the research area indicated in the original placement/scholarship offer, providing:
- the new research area is one of the University's stated areas of research concentration; and
- there will be no extension of the period of the new course arising from the change of research area beyond the period of the original placement/scholarship offer, including any previously approved extensions. The only exception to this rule is where the change of research area results from circumstances relating to the research which are outside the control of the student and the University.

10. TERMINATION OF AN IPRS

10.1 The Research Sub-Committee is required to terminate an IPRS:
- if the student ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in paragraph 4.3 of these Guidelines other than during a period in which the IPRS has been deferred; or
- if, in the opinion of the Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee, the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence in accordance with the offer of scholarship; or
- if the University determines that a student is guilty of serious academic misconduct: or
- when the student ceases to be a full-time research student; or
- if the student does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of deferral and has not made arrangements to extend that period of deferral; or
• if the student fails to maintain satisfactory progress, as determined by the Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee; or
• if the Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee is able to offer the student a HDR place funded by the RTS.

10.2 A terminated IPRS cannot be re-instated unless it can be shown that the termination occurred in error.

11. SUPERVISION AND FACILITIES

11.1 The University shall
• 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.

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