POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS SCHEME-SPECIFIC FUNDING RULES FOR FUNDING COMMENCING IN 2019

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INTRODUCTION

The following sections provide additional information about the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Postgraduate Scholarships scheme, including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules
- the 2018 Guide to NHMRC Peer Review, incorporating the Postgraduate Scholarships Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines for funding commencing in 2019
- the 2018 NHMRC Advice and Instructions to Applicants, incorporating the Postgraduate Scholarships Scheme-Specific Advice and Instructions to Applicants for funding commencing in 2019
- the NHMRC Funding Agreement.

It is recommended that you read the 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules before reading these scheme-specific rules.

1. ABOUT THE SCHEME

1.1 Description

The Postgraduate Scholarship scheme provides funding for successful applicants to attain a research based postgraduate degree (Doctor of Philosophy or Research Masters degree).

1.2 Objectives

The aim of the Postgraduate Scholarship scheme is to support outstanding health, medical and dental graduates early in their career so they can be trained to conduct research that is internationally competitive and develop a capacity for original independent research within Australia.

1.3 Who should apply?

Researchers who wish to attain a research focused postgraduate degree, either:
- Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD)
- Research Masters degree (MPhil or equivalent).

2. KEY CHANGES

Applicants should note the following change to the Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme-Specific Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2019:

- Section 5.4.2 Study Part-time Scholarship Option
  Part-time Postgraduate Scholarships are available for applicants who are undertaking additional training to further establish their career.

- Section 7.2 Electromagnetic Energy Research
  Wording has been updated to reflect current Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) policy.

3. CRITICAL DATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 April 2018</td>
<td>Applications open in Research Grants Management System (RGMS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 June 2018 5:00pm (AEST)</td>
<td>Closing date for Supervisor Reports to be submitted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Applications close in RGMS

Completed applications must be submitted to the NHMRC in RGMS by **5.00 pm AEST** on the specified closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

Application outcomes are announced as peer review processes are finalised and Ministerial approvals are obtained. Refer to sections 11.4 and 11.6 of the **2018 NHMRC Funding Rules** for further details.

### 4. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed and ranked against the assessment criteria listed below:

1. Academic Record and Research Achievement – relative to opportunity
2. Research Environment and Supervisor
3. Research Project

All applications are assessed relative to opportunity taking into consideration any career disruptions (see section 6.2 of the **2018 NHMRC Funding Rules**).

For further information, refer to the *Postgraduate Scholarships Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines for funding commencing in 2019.*

#### 4.1 Additional Criteria for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health applications

All applications that relate to the improvement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health must also address the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* (see section 6.3 of the **2018 NHMRC Funding Rules**).

### 5. ELIGIBILITY

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings prior to an application being submitted. It is up to the applicant, in consultation with their Research Administration Officer (RAO), to judge whether or not their application will be suitable.

To be eligible for a Postgraduate Scholarship, applicants must:

- only apply for one Postgraduate Scholarship per application round (regardless of the category in which they are applying)
- ensure they submit a complete application, including supervisor report and uploaded documents required to conduct a complete assessment of an application (incomplete applications will be ineligible)
- not have previously received funding for a NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarship, and
- have a proposed project that is based in Australia. Elements of the project can be undertaken outside of Australia (e.g. data gathering) but the scholar, supervisor and project must be all Australian based and located at an Australian Institution.

Category-specific eligibility requirements can be found in section 6.

NHMRC reserves the right to relocate an application to the correct research category based on the research proposal, the supervisor’s expertise and/or advice from the peer review panels and, in doing so, applications that do not meet the requirements of the category to which they have been relocated will be ineligible.
5.1 Ineligible situations

Applicants will be ineligible if at the time of application:

- the applicant is a current holder of an Australian Government Scholarship such as an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)
- the applicant is in their final year of an Honours degree
- the degree proposed is not a PhD or a Research Masters degree
- the proposed degree is not a research degree
- the applicant has completed more than 24 months of their PhD candidature as at 1 January in the first year of funding (or 12 months of their Masters candidature if applying for a Masters Postgraduate Scholarship from 1 January in the first year of funding).

5.2 Multiple Grant Eligibility and Other Funding Sources

NHMRC Postgraduate Scholars are not able to personally receive a salary from another comparable award, full-time academic position, or other full-time position in conjunction with their NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarship. NHMRC Postgraduate Scholars must inform the NHMRC if such situations arise.

When applying for a Postgraduate Scholarship, applicants must declare the source, duration and levels of all research funding held or applied for, including all NHMRC funding, in order to ensure funding by the Commonwealth is not duplicated.

NHMRC may liaise with other funding agencies to discuss any overlap between applications in order to avoid duplication of funding (refer to section 8.2 of the 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules).

5.3 Citizenship

Refer to section 7.4 of the 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules. Applicants must declare their citizenship in part “Pro-PD Personal Details” of their CV in RGMS. Applicants who are not Australian citizens must also indicate their Permanent Resident of Australia status in the same section, otherwise the application will be ineligible.

5.4 Time Commitment

The duration of a full-time or part-time Postgraduate Scholarship will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken towards the nominated degree prior to the commencement of the Postgraduate Scholarship.

Example: full-time equivalent (FTE) study completed at 31 December in the year of application is six months. Therefore the scholar will be entitled to receive 2.5 years of full-time funding (three years minus six months).

5.4.1 Full-time Postgraduate Scholarships

These are intended to provide support for scholars who are engaging in research full-time. All Postgraduate Scholarships are funded for a maximum period of three years for a PhD and two years for a Research Masters degree. All Postgraduate Scholarships are funded for a minimum of one year.

5.4.2 Study Part-time Scholarship Option

Part-time Postgraduate Scholarships are available to the following applicants:

- Medical/Dental Postgraduate Scholarship holders who are undertaking dual training – postgraduate medical/dental and a PhD program.
- applicants who are undertaking additional training to further establish their career.
The maximum period for which a part-time Postgraduate Scholarship can be held is six years (part-time Postgraduate Scholarships are not offered for a Masters degree, except where an applicant’s personal circumstances require this, as detailed in section 5.4.3 below).

5.4.3 Personal Part-time Option

There are occasions when postgraduate scholars who wish to maintain a research career are unable to do so because their capacity to engage in full-time research is limited due to:

- parental or carer responsibilities
- personal illness.

In these circumstances, scholars in all categories are able to apply for part-time support to allow them to divide their time between their personal situations and part-time research.

Under this part-time option, non-scholarship time is intended to be dedicated to serving the needs of a scholar’s personal circumstances, and cannot be spent on other paid employment, research, teaching or administrative roles, or clinical or practitioner responsibilities. The only exception is for scholars who already hold a scholarship on a part-time basis as described in section 5.4.2 above. This option is available for 50-90% of a full-time position (i.e. 0.5-0.9 FTE), and is intended to be held for the duration of the award.

The length of the Scholarship may be extended to adjust for periods in which the Scholarship was taken on a part-time basis (see section 5.4). The maximum period for which a part-time PhD Postgraduate Scholarship can be held is six years, and a part-time Research Masters is four years.

It is important to note that NHMRC will not provide compensation for any taxation components (refer to section 8.5 Taxation).

6. CATEGORIES OF AWARD

6.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research Postgraduate Scholarship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Categories</th>
<th>Stipends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recent Medical Graduate</td>
<td>Medical Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Graduate with Further Clinical Training</td>
<td>Medical Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Graduate</td>
<td>Medical Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing, Midwifery &amp; Allied Health Professional</td>
<td>Priority Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate (other than above)</td>
<td>Standard Stipend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectives
Postgraduate Scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research are awarded to provide support for research training or training leading to research in areas of health with particular relevance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Description
The successful applicant must enrol for a postgraduate degree (such as a PhD or Research Masters) at a fully accredited institution, which will enable the applicant to pursue research relevant to Indigenous health.

Eligibility
In addition to the requirements detailed in section 5, in awarding these Postgraduate Scholarships, attention will be paid to previous qualifications and experience. Particular weight will be given to prior knowledge and experience of Indigenous culture and health. The proposed project must be in an area of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, and the applicant will be required to demonstrate active engagement/consultation with the Indigenous community.

In addition to the requirements under section 5, those eligible to apply are:
• Australian citizens and permanent residents who have already completed a health related degree or a degree in an area applicable to public health research at the time of submission of the application
• Australian citizens and permanent residents who are medical or dental graduates currently registered to practice within Australia
• health related graduates and graduates in areas applicable to public health who are from overseas (and meet the citizenship/permanent residency requirements as outlined in section 7.4 of the 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules)
• medical or dental graduates from overseas who are currently registered to practice in Australia and meet the citizenship/permanent residency requirements outlined in section 7.4 of the 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules. Applicants will be required to provide registration details of their medical/dental registration in Australia in order for funding to commence.

6.2 Medical/Dental Postgraduate Scholarship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Categories</th>
<th>Stipends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combined MBBS/PhD</td>
<td>Standard Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent Medical Graduate</td>
<td>Medical Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Graduate with Further Clinical Training</td>
<td>Medical Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Graduate</td>
<td>Medical Stipend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectives
Medical/Dental Postgraduate Scholarships are awarded to provide support to combined MBBS/PhD students, and medical or dental graduates undertaking a higher research degree involving full-time research.

Description
Medical/Dental Postgraduate Scholarships are designed to encourage research training for combined MBBS/PhD students, and medical and dental graduates in all relevant health-related disciplines including the social and behavioural sciences.

For medical and dental graduates, both recent graduates and those undergoing further clinical training are encouraged to apply.

Eligibility
In addition to the requirements detailed in section 5, those eligible to apply are:
• students currently enrolled in a combined MBBS/PhD program
• Australian citizens/Permanent Residents, who are medical or dental graduates currently registered to practice within Australia at the time of application
• medical graduates who are applying during their intern year (Medical/Dental Postgraduate Scholarships may be awarded to dental graduates prior to graduation)
• medical or dental graduates from overseas who are currently registered to practice in Australia and meet the citizenship/permanent residency requirements outlined in section 7.4 of the 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules. Applicants will be required to provide registration details of their medical/dental registration in Australia in order for funding to commence.

6.3 Dora Lush Biomedical Research Postgraduate Scholarship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical Graduate with Further Clinical Training</td>
<td>Medical Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing, Midwifery &amp; Allied Health Professional</td>
<td>Priority Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate (other than above)</td>
<td>Standard Stipend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectives
The purpose of the Dora Lush Biomedical Research Postgraduate Scholarship is to actively encourage applications from graduates of outstanding ability whose pathway to PhD or Masters studies has been subject to significant interruption or delay. This Scholarship will provide an opportunity for these individuals to obtain formal training in biomedical research.

Description
Applicants in this category will need to demonstrate that they achieved their most recent academic qualification at least five years before 1 January of the year in which the award is to commence, and that during that five year period their pathway to biomedical PhD or Masters studies has been interrupted or delayed.

Applicants could include but are not limited to:

- people whose undergraduate qualifications were achieved some time in the past but whose career has been interrupted as a result of one or more of the following circumstances:
  - childbirth or other parenting responsibilities
  - support provided to ill or elderly relatives
  - illness or misadventure
  - community work, especially in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
  - lack of previous financial capacity and the need to earn a living in the meantime.
- people who pursued other interests (e.g. teaching) and wish to now develop a career in health or medical research
- people whose qualifications are in a non-health or medical discipline (eg Physics or Arts), but who now wish to develop a career in health or medical research
- people who have built a significant body of experience through laboratory work.

Eligibility
In addition to the requirements under section 5, those eligible to apply must meet the following criteria:

- the date on which the most recent academic qualification was achieved must be at least five years before 1 January of the year in which the scholarship is to commence
- the proposed PhD or Research Masters program must be in a biomedical field.

Statement of Circumstances
Applicants will need to provide a statement that outlines the circumstances which have delayed their ability to pursue PhD studies. This evidence should be brief but be sufficient to establish the reason for that delay.

6.4 Public Health and Health Services Research Postgraduate Scholarship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Categories</th>
<th>Stipends</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recent Medical Graduate</td>
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<td>Nursing, Midwifery &amp; Allied Health Professional</td>
<td>Priority Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate (other than above)</td>
<td>Standard Stipend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectives
The purpose of the Public Health and Health Services Research Postgraduate Scholarship is to encourage graduates to obtain formal training in public health and/or health services research.

Description
Applications will be considered in relevant public health and health services-related disciplines including the social and behavioural sciences, health policy, health services, epidemiology and health economics.

Eligibility
In addition to the requirements under section 5, those eligible to apply are:
• Australian citizens who have already completed a health related degree or a degree in an area applicable to public health research at the time of submission of the application

• Australian citizens/Permanent Residents who are medical or dental graduates currently registered to practice within Australia

• health related graduates and graduates in areas applicable to public health who are from overseas (and meet the citizenship/permanent residency requirements as outlined in section 7.4 of 2018 the NHMRC Funding Rules)

• medical or dental graduates from overseas who are currently registered to practice in Australia and meet the citizenship/permanent residency requirements outlined in section 7.4 of the 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules. Applicants will be required to provide registration details of their medical/dental registration in Australia in order for funding to commence.

7. TYPES OF APPLICANT

7.1 Co-funded Postgraduate Scholarships

NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarships offer co-funding opportunities with several organisations. The most current information is available on the NHMRC website.

These Postgraduate Scholarships are offered through co-funding partnerships established between NHMRC and each partner organisation. They offer additional opportunities to researchers whose work is particularly relevant to the concerns and research interests of the partner organisations.

Co-funded scholarships are offered alongside other Postgraduate Scholarships. The evaluation and ranking of an application by NHMRC is entirely independent of any assessment made by co-funding partners. These are not alternative awards but may have additional financial value compared to other Postgraduate Scholarships.

For the purposes of the Privacy Act 1988 (refer to section 9.5 of the 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules for more detail), applicants (and other persons whose details appear in grant applications, e.g. other investigators) should be aware that if they indicate they wish to be considered for co-funding, NHMRC will provide their personal information, including all pertinent application documentation and peer review outcomes, to the co-funding body or bodies nominated by the applicant. The purpose of providing this information to the co-funder(s) is to enable them to assess the application’s eligibility for funding under the relevant co-funding arrangement.

Further information on co-funding partners’ research interests and priorities may be found on the NHMRC website.

In the event that a co-funder is unable to fulfil their obligation, NHMRC will continue to support the scholarship at the normal stipend rate for the sub-category of the scholarship awarded. Any additional benefits that may have been provided by the co-funding partner will not be supported by NHMRC.

Note: some co-funding organisations may require a separate application in addition to the one provided to NHMRC, and therefore it may be beneficial for applicants to contact the co-funding organisation to identify any additional requirements that might apply.

7.2 Electromagnetic Energy Research

Applicants who select EME funding in a Postgraduate Scholarship application should be aware that NHMRC, in conjunction with the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), will determine if an application meets the criteria for EME research and is eligible to be funded through the Australian Government’s levy on radio communication license fees. NHMRC will consider EME research applications in the Medical/Dental and Public Health streams only.

Applicants are advised to review the 2017 ARPANSA Technical Report “Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Energy and Health: Research Needs” and ensure their application aligns with the research agenda into
Radio Frequency (RF) EME and health outlined in the Technical Report. Applications that are not in scope will be considered for NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarship funding only.

7.3 Other Scholarships

7.3.1 Gustav Nossal Postgraduate Scholarship

Each year the highest ranked Medical/Dental Postgraduate Scholarship applicant will be awarded the Gustav Nossal Postgraduate Scholarship.

This award is named after Sir Gustav Joseph V. Nossal who was the Director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research and Professor of Medical Biology at the University of Melbourne. Sir Gustav Nossal is distinguished for contributions to the fields of antibody formation and immunological tolerance.

Note: This Scholarship does not provide any additional funding to the Postgraduate Scholarship package.

8. FUNDING DETAILS

8.1 Level and Duration of Funding

The funding duration of Postgraduate Scholarships will vary between one and three years FTE, depending on the award applied for, and any periods of study already undertaken. Funding will cease from the day the PhD/Masters thesis is submitted. Awardees (through their RAOs) are required to notify the NHMRC at the time their thesis is submitted and provide evidence of date of submission.

8.1.1 Stipend

The stipend rates for funding commencing in 2019 are outlined on the NHMRC website.

8.1.2 Standard Stipend

The standard stipend is provided to non-allied health graduates and non-medical graduates.

8.1.3 Priority Stipend

The priority stipend is provided to nursing, midwifery and allied health graduates. In order to receive the priority stipend, nursing, midwifery and allied health professionals must be currently registered at the time of application.

For allied health professions that do not require registration, applicants must provide evidence that they are current members of their bona fide professional organisation and therefore authorised to practice at the time of application.

8.1.4 Medical Stipend

The medical stipend is provided to medical and dental graduates.

8.1.5 Part-time Stipend

Rates for part-time Postgraduate Scholarships will be paid pro-rata e.g. a 50% part-time Postgraduate Scholarship will receive 50% of the applicable stipend rate.

Note: Rates are revised annually and may change.
8.1.6 Allowances

Allowances are automatically incorporated for the following:

- an allowance of $2,250 pa is provided to assist with the purchase of goods related to the Scholarship and/or travel to relevant conferences. This allowance may be used flexibly between these items of expenditure. Pro rata applies for this allowance for part-time Scholarships

- a thesis allowance (one off) of $500 is provided in the final year of the Postgraduate Scholarship as a contribution towards costs associated with the presentation of a thesis. No further allowances or claims are available in relation to the costs of thesis preparation and presentation. Applicants do not need to apply for this allowance as it will be paid automatically to the scholar in the final year of the Postgraduate Scholarship.

Allowances are payable upon application in the following circumstances:

- A relocation allowance is payable for successful applicants to assist with the cost of moving from their normal place of residence to the town or city in which they will take up their Postgraduate Scholarship:
  - the allowance is only available at the commencement of the award and is not payable for transfers to another location at any other time during the duration of the Postgraduate Scholarship
  - the maximum rate at which the reimbursement is calculated is equal to the economy class airfare at the student or concession rate
  - the allowance is only available for travel within Australia
  - the allowance includes reimbursement for a dependent spouse and any dependent children
  - the maximum amount payable for the scholar (including dependents) is $1,385
  - the allowance is only available by way of reimbursement and will not be paid in advance
  - claims should be submitted to the NHMRC through the RAO of the institution administering the Postgraduate Scholarship
  - evidence of previous residence and of the travel undertaken must be included with the claim
  - copies of original documents are acceptable so long as the RAO has sighted the original documents and indicates that they have done so in the documentation accompanying the claim
  - there is no claim form that needs to be completed; a letter outlining the details of the reimbursement claimed is sufficient
  - claims must be submitted within six months of the date on which the Postgraduate Scholarship is taken up.

8.2 Full-Time Postgraduate Scholarships

Postgraduate Scholarships are provided for full-time study and cannot be held concurrently with full-time employment. However, postgraduate scholars are entitled to undertake paid work not related to their PhD during the term of their scholarship in line with the conditions of their Administering Institution, providing that it does not interfere with the Postgraduate Scholar’s full-time study commitments.

8.3 Study Part-Time Postgraduate Scholarships

Postgraduate Scholarships are provided for part-time study and cannot be held concurrently with full-time employment (refer to section 5.4.2 of this document). However, Postgraduate Scholars are entitled to undertake paid work not related to their PhD during the term of their Postgraduate Scholarship in line with the conditions of their Administering Institution, providing that it does not interfere with the scholar’s part-time study commitments.
8.4 Short Term Support to Facilitate International Indigenous Researcher Networks

Funding to ‘Facilitate International Indigenous Researcher Networks’ (FIIRN) is available to Postgraduate Scholarship award holders who identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. The purpose of this funding is to:

- facilitate appropriate international mentoring linkages for early career researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, building further on the intentions of the former Tripartite Agreement and current ‘Letter of Intent’
- support NHMRC’s strategic objectives in relation to building capacity among researchers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

Awardees who identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent are able to request an additional total $11,000 as part of their grant funding for travel to appropriate international conferences and/or short term collaborative activities. Travel to/within New Zealand or Canada is particularly encouraged. Eligible applicants that wish to be considered for this funding supplement must tick the relevant check box as part of their application in RGMS, otherwise they will not be able to request the funding supplement at a later date. Where there is an oversubscription from eligible applicants for this funding which exceeds NHMRC’s allocated funds to this supplement (currently $100,000), NHMRC will contribute a pro rata share of the available funding to each applicant.

In order to receive the funding supplement, applicants must be able to demonstrate all of the following at the time of application:

- they are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent (see information available here)
- they intend to use the funds for travel to relevant international conferences and/or for collaborative purposes
- the supplement was requested (via the relevant “tick box”) as part of their application.

Awardees who choose to utilise the FIIRN supplement are required to report on their use of the funds. The scholar's supervisor must submit a statement to NHMRC (through Postaward@nhmrc.gov.au) no later than six months prior to the end date of the grant. This statement must outline the following:

- what the funding supplement was used for
- the mentoring linkages established as a result of utilising the funding supplement.

Awardees who have not utilised the FIIRN supplement at the time the statement is required, but still plan to use it prior to the cessation of their grant must report on how the funds will be intended to be used and how this will establish mentoring linkages. Any unspent FIIRN funds remaining at the cessation of the grant will be recovered by NHMRC.

8.5 Taxation

Responsibility for taxation components for part-time Postgraduate Scholarships is entirely between Postgraduate Scholarship holders and their institutions. Postgraduate Scholarship holders should seek professional advice from qualified taxation advisors to clarify their personal taxation responsibilities.

9. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Applications are assessed and evaluated through a peer review process. For further information about this process, refer to the 2018 NHMRC Guide to Peer Review and the Postgraduate Scholarships Scheme-Specific Peer Review Guidelines for Funding Commencing in 2019.

10. GRANT ADMINISTRATION

Administrative obligations and processes specific to Postgraduate Scholarship awardees are outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in the NHMRC Funding Agreement, section 12 of the 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules and on the NHMRC website.
10.1 Variations

Refer to section 12.5 of the 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules prior to considering a variation.

In general, variation requests should include the following information:

- a statement from the postgraduate scholar outlining the reasons why the variation is required
- a statement of support from the current Supervisor.

Further information regarding grantee variations is provided in the NHMRC Variations Policy, which can be found on the NHMRC website.

10.2 Acceptance of a Postgraduate Scholarship

Successful applicants must accept an offer of award of a Postgraduate Scholarship by the nominated acceptance date. All conditions of the grant must be met in order for any payment from NHMRC to commence.

Postgraduate Scholars who have accepted an offer of an award are expected to commence on 1 January of the first year of the award. Any variations must be in accord with the NHMRC Variations Policy.

NHMRC may, at its discretion for what it considers sufficient cause, suspend the tenure of a Postgraduate Scholarship for such time as is thought fit, or withdraw the Postgraduate Scholarship and all payments.

10.3 Suspension of a Postgraduate Scholarship

Postgraduate Scholars may apply to suspend their award in accordance with NHMRC’s Variations Policy.

The Scholarship will be extended by a period of time equal to the duration of the suspension.

10.4 Transfer to/from Part-time Status

10.4.1 Full-time Scholarships converting to Part-time Status

NHMRC recognises that the personal circumstances of Postgraduate Scholars can change over time and that the need for a scholar to continue in a full-time arrangement may no longer apply to their situation.

Full-time Postgraduate Scholars may apply to undertake a period of their award on a part-time basis for such personal reasons as providing parental or family support, but not for vocational reasons such as wishing to work part-time as a lecturer, or as a medical or health professional practitioner (section 5.4.3). Requests to convert to part-time will be considered by NHMRC on a case-by-case basis and must have the support of the Scholar’s Administering Institution.

All requests for a change to part-time must be supported in writing by the Scholar’s supervisor.

In all cases where part-time status is approved, payments will be adjusted to the appropriate pro-rata rate, determined by the percentage of time spent on research. The duration of the Scholarship will be extended accordingly, up to a maximum period of six years (refer to section 5.4).

10.4.2 Part-time Scholarships converting to Full-time Status

While part-time Postgraduate Scholarships are intended to be part-time at the indicated FTE rate for the duration of the award, holders may request conversion to full-time. Where a request to convert or return to full-time is approved, the remaining part-time portion of the scholarship will be converted to the full-time equivalent of that part-time rate (i.e. if 2 years remain on a scholarship held at 0.5 FTE, it will be converted to one year full-time).
10.4.3 Parental leave

Parental Leave is paid in accordance with the arrangements applicable at the Postgraduate Scholar’s Administering Institution, up to a limit of 12 weeks, per instance of parental leave. Leave taken beyond the 12 weeks is permitted, but is not paid by NHMRC. The institution may, however, continue payments under its Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. If the Postgraduate Scholar wishes to take parental leave beyond 12 weeks, they will need to suspend their Scholarship (see section 10.3).

The duration of the Postgraduate Scholarship will be extended by the amount of parental leave, whether paid or unpaid, that is taken.

Parental leave required under State and Territory legislation will be managed separately by the Administering Institution.

10.4.4 Recreational Leave

Postgraduate Scholars shall be entitled to recreational leave in accordance with the conditions applied by the Administering Institution. All leave must be taken prior to the termination of the Postgraduate Scholarship. If the leave taken is longer than the period of recreational leave accrued, a request to suspend the Postgraduate Scholarship should be submitted (refer to section 10.3).

10.4.5 Sick Leave

Postgraduate scholars who have been unable to continue with their studies through illness or misadventure are entitled to stipend support, in accordance with the provisions of the scholar’s Administering Institution up to a maximum of 12 weeks for the duration of the Scholarship. This does not extend the duration of the Postgraduate Scholarship. Postgraduate Scholars wishing to extend their period of sick leave beyond this period may do so by suspending their Postgraduate Scholarship for up to a further 12 months. NHMRC will not provide stipend support for this extended period (if granted).

Postgraduate Scholars must advise details of such suspensions to NHMRC through their RAO and must include:

- documentation supporting the reason for the suspension (medical certificates etc)
- a statement from the Postgraduate Studies Office verifying suspension of study
- a statement from the supervisor confirming the circumstances.

The duration of the Postgraduate Scholarship will be extended to compensate for the period of suspension (if granted).

10.4.6 Transfer to a different Administering Institution

Where a variation involves a move to a different Administering Institution, the Postgraduate Scholar must make a request in writing through RGMS. If the proposed change is made without approval from NHMRC, Postgraduate Scholarship funding will cease.

Refer to the NHMRC website for further information.

10.4.7 Extensions to Postgraduate Scholarships

In limited exceptional circumstances, requests to extend the duration of a Postgraduate Scholarship may be approved. Exceptional circumstances would normally be for events outside the Postgraduate Scholar’s control, such as external disasters (e.g. fires) affecting their project, but does not include situations relating to normal research activities (e.g. pursuing a novel discovery in the course of planned experiments), the success/failure or progress of experiments, the writing of a thesis or matters of a personal nature. The maximum period for which a funded extension can be granted is up to six months. Funding will cease from the date the awardee submits their thesis, even if the extension period has not yet lapsed. Scholars are required to inform the NHMRC when they submit their thesis, and provide evidence of submission date. No extensions are possible for Masters students.
In all cases, requests to extend a Postgraduate Scholarship must be submitted in writing through RGMS. Requests must be supported in writing by the Postgraduate Scholar’s Supervisor and with the approval of the Postgraduate Studies Office (or its equivalent) of the institution administering the Postgraduate Scholarship. Evidence of the Postgraduate Studies Office approval must be included with the request.

10.4.8 Conversion of Masters Scholarships

NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarships awarded for a Masters degree will not be extended if converting to a PhD.

10.5  Reporting

No progress or final scientific reporting is required for Scholars.

The Administering Institution has financial reporting requirements including annual Financial Statements and a Final Acquittal Statement. Refer to the Financial Reporting page of the NHMRC website for further information.

11. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Category Descriptors for assessing Postgraduate Scholarship applications.
Category Descriptors for assessing Postgraduate Scholarship applications

The following scoring descriptors are to be used as a guide to score an application against each of the assessment criteria. The category descriptors are indicative, rather than definitive or exhaustive. Evaluation of performance will take into account opportunity, research discipline and overall summation of research contribution.

Assessing Indigenous Contributions
It is recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants often make additional valuable contributions to policy development, clinical/public health leadership and/or service delivery, community activities and linkages, and are often representatives on key committees. If applicable, these contributions should be considered when assessing research output and track record.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Criterion 1</th>
<th>Criterion 2</th>
<th>Criterion 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Exemplary</td>
<td>Academic Record and Research Achievement – Relative to Opportunity 60%</td>
<td>Research Environment and Supervisor 20%</td>
<td>Research Project 20%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Exemplary Academic Merit for Field/Discipline (e.g. MBBS, Public Health)**, signified by (for example): | | | The Research Project: 
| - academic record | - are extremely well matched to the applicant’s proposed project | - has objectives that are extremely well-defined | 
| - medals, prizes and awards | - provide exemplary mentoring and training arrangements | - is flawless by design | 
| - quantity and quality of research publications in their field | - include extremely high quality research support systems for the applicant | - will be achieved | 
| - presentations, including posters and seminars | - offer exceptional collaborative opportunities for the applicant | - will make an exemplary contribution to the applicant’s future career aspirations. | 
| - postgraduate/research training and/or research/professional experience | - offer exemplary opportunity to extend the applicant’s knowledge and skills. | | 
| - broader community engagement. | | | |

<p>| 6 Outstanding | Academic Merit for Field/Discipline (e.g. MBBS, Public Health), signified by (for example): | The Research Environment And Supervisor: | The Research Project: |
| <strong>Outstanding Academic Merit for Field/Discipline (e.g. MBBS, Public Health)</strong>, signified by (for example): | | - are very well matched to the applicant’s proposed project |
| - academic record | - include outstanding mentoring and training arrangements | - has objectives that are very well-defined |
| - medals, prizes and awards | - offer very high quality research support systems for the applicant | - is nearly flawless by design |
| - research achievement and productivity commensurate with authorship of research publications, book chapters and presentations | - offer outstanding collaborative opportunities for the applicant | - is highly feasible |
| - postgraduate/research training and/or research/professional experience | - offer outstanding potential to extend the applicant’s knowledge and skills. | - will make an outstanding contribution to the applicant’s future career aspirations. |
| - broader community engagement. | | | |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Criterion 1</th>
<th>Criterion 2</th>
<th>Criterion 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>5 Excellent</td>
<td>An application which supports the aims of the scheme and meets the assessment criteria with only some minor weaknesses.</td>
<td>The Research Environment And Supervisor:</td>
<td>The Research Project:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Excellent Academic Merit for Field/Discipline (e.g. MBBS, Public Health), signified by (for example):</td>
<td>• are well matched to the applicant’s proposed project</td>
<td>• has objectives that are well-defined</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• academic record</td>
<td>• Include excellent mentoring and training arrangements</td>
<td>• is very well designed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• medals, prizes and awards</td>
<td>• offer high quality research support systems for the applicant</td>
<td>• is highly feasible</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• research achievement and productivity commensurate with authorship of research publications, book chapters and presentations.</td>
<td>• offer excellent collaborative opportunities for the applicant</td>
<td>• will make an excellent contribution to the applicant’s future career aspirations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• postgraduate/research training and/or research/professional experience</td>
<td>• offer excellent potential to extend the applicant’s knowledge and skills.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• broader community engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Very good</td>
<td>An application which supports the aims of the scheme and meets the assessment criteria, but with numerous minor weaknesses</td>
<td>The Research Environment And Supervisor:</td>
<td>The Research Project:</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Very Good Academic Merit for Field/Discipline (e.g. MBBS, Public Health), signified by (for example):</td>
<td>• are suited to the applicant’s proposed project</td>
<td>• has objectives that are clear</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• academic record</td>
<td>• Includes very good quality mentoring and training arrangements</td>
<td>• is well defined</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• medals, prizes and awards</td>
<td>• offer very good quality research support systems for the applicant</td>
<td>• is feasible</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Research achievement and productivity commensurate with authorship of research publications, book chapters and presentations.</td>
<td>• offer very good collaborative opportunities for the applicant</td>
<td>• will make a very good contribution to the applicant’s future career aspirations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• postgraduate/research training and/or research/professional experience</td>
<td>• offer very good potential to extend the applicant’s knowledge and skills.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• broader community engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Good</td>
<td>An application which supports the aims of the scheme and meets the assessment criteria, but with at least one moderate weakness</td>
<td>The Research Environment And Supervisor:</td>
<td>The Research Project:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Good Academic Merit for Field/Discipline (e.g. MBBS, Public Health), signified by (for example):</td>
<td>• are somewhat suited to the applicant’s proposed project</td>
<td>• has objectives that are adequately defined</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• academic record</td>
<td>• includes good quality mentoring and training arrangements</td>
<td>• is overall clear in respects to design</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• medals, prizes and awards</td>
<td>• offer good quality research support systems for the applicant</td>
<td>• is likely to be achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• research achievement and productivity commensurate with authorship of research publications, book chapters and presentations.</td>
<td>• offer good collaborative opportunities for the applicant</td>
<td>• will make a good contribution to the applicant’s future career aspirations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• postgraduate/research training and/or research/professional experience</td>
<td>• offer good potential to extend the applicant’s knowledge and skills.</td>
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<td>• broader community engagement</td>
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<td>Score</td>
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<td><strong>2 Satisfactory</strong>&lt;br&gt;An application which partly meets the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria with noticeable deficiencies or shortcomings evident by some moderate weaknesses&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;It is expected that the bottom 15% of applications would be ranked in this category or lower.</td>
<td><strong>Sound Academic Merit for Field/Discipline (e.g. MBBS, Public Health), signified by (for example):</strong>&lt;br&gt;- academic record&lt;br&gt;- medals, prizes and awards&lt;br&gt;- research achievement and productivity commensurate with authorship of research publications, book chapters and presentations.&lt;br&gt;- postgraduate/research training and/or research/professional experience&lt;br&gt;- broader community engagement.</td>
<td><strong>The Research Environment and Supervisor:</strong>&lt;br&gt;- are adequate to the applicant's proposed project&lt;br&gt;- includes satisfactory mentoring and training arrangements&lt;br&gt;- offer satisfactory research support systems for the applicant&lt;br&gt;- offer satisfactory collaborative opportunities for the applicant&lt;br&gt;- offer satisfactory potential to extend the applicant's knowledge and skills.</td>
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<td><strong>1 Weak</strong>&lt;br&gt;An application which marginally meets the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria. Shortcomings or deficiencies against most criteria or aims predominate&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;It is expected that the bottom 5% of applications would be ranked in this category or lower.</td>
<td><strong>Limited Academic Merit for Field/Discipline (e.g. MBBS, Public Health), signified by (for example):</strong>&lt;br&gt;- academic record&lt;br&gt;- medals, prizes and awards&lt;br&gt;- research achievement and productivity commensurate with authorship of research publications, book chapters and presentations.&lt;br&gt;- postgraduate/research training and/or research/professional experience&lt;br&gt;- broader community engagement.</td>
<td><strong>The Research Environment and Supervisor:</strong>&lt;br&gt;- are not ideal to the applicant’s proposed project&lt;br&gt;- includes limited mentoring and training arrangements&lt;br&gt;- offer limited research support systems for the applicant&lt;br&gt;- offer limited collaborative opportunities for the applicant&lt;br&gt;- offer limited potential to extend the applicant’s knowledge and skills.</td>
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