

INDUSTRY-BASED GRADUATE RESEARCH STIPEND SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION GUIDE

**Beyond Participation: Operationalising Theory of
Change for Valid and Sustainable Impact Measurement
in Community Sport-for-Development**

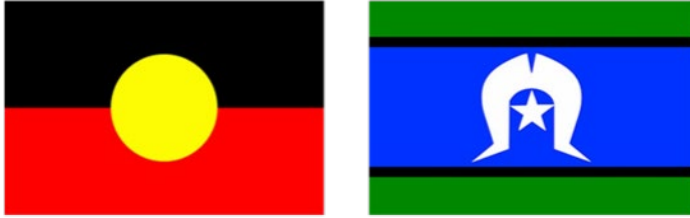
Doctor of Philosophy ONLY

Newly commencing Australian residents (all domestic students including Australian citizens, Australian permanent residents, New Zealand citizens and holders of a permanent Australian humanitarian visa)

16/06/2026

Version 1.0

Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge, recognise and respect the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Traditional Owners of University land where our campuses are situated. In Victoria, the Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin Nation; in Sydney, the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation; and in Brisbane, the Turrbal and Yugara people.

As we share our own knowledge practices within the University, we acknowledge that the land on which we meet, learn and grow is a place of age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We honour the depth of wisdom held by Aboriginal communities and recognise their enduring connection to Country. Sovereignty has never been ceded.

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Key Details

This guide is for applicants interested in a graduate research scholarship commencing in **Research Period 2 2026** at Victoria University.

This scholarship is for the purpose of undertaking a graduate research degree related to the project outlined below and in [Table 1](#).

The Stipend Value and Included Benefits are outlined in [Table 2](#).

The Project

- Partner with the Western Bulldogs Communication Foundation on real-world impact
- Co-design and test a validated, Theory of Change-aligned impact framework
- Help a community organisation prove its impact to funders and policymakers

Project Description

Community sport-for-development programs face growing pressure to show they make a real difference, but most can only report how many people took part - not the lasting change they aim to create. This PhD looks at how community organisations can turn their Theory of Change (a map of how their work leads to specific outcomes) into a practical, trustworthy way of measuring impact that they can keep using over time. The Western Bulldogs Community Foundation, which reaches more than 5,000 people a year and has just mapped out its pathways to Healthy, Safe and Equal communities, is the real-world case study. Drawing on evaluation theory and proven measurement methods - and testing approaches like Social Return on Investment rather than taking them at face value - the project will co-design and trial a reporting framework that gives the Foundation stronger evidence to learn from and share with funders, government and communities.

Desirable skills and experience

This project suits applicants with an Honours or Masters research degree in a relevant field, such as public health, sport management, social science, evaluation, or non-profit management.

You should be confident with mixed-methods research, particularly qualitative methods like interviews, workshops and document analysis, and comfortable designing ways to measure outcomes.

Some familiarity with program evaluation, Theory of Change, or social impact measurement is an advantage but not essential, as a willingness to learn these approaches matters more.

As the research is co-designed with an industry partner, strong communication skills and an interest in working alongside community organisations and stakeholders are also important.

Application due date

a. Application Due Date	31 August 2026
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Table 1: Project Outline

Item	Detail
a. Expected Commencement Date	26 October
b. Project Title	Beyond Participation: Operationalising Theory of Change for Valid and Sustainable Impact Measurement in Community Sport-for-Development
c. Funding Agency	Western Bulldogs Community Foundation / Victoria University
d. Chief Investigator	Professor Camilla Brockett
e. Associate Supervisor	Professor Ramon Spaaij
f. Special Conditions	Intellectual Property Assignment Required Yes
	Working with Children Check Required No
	Police Check Required No

Table 2: Stipend Value and Included Benefits

Item	Detail
a. Value of stipend per annum	A\$39,278 (2026 rate)
b. Fixed rate or incremented	Incremented
c. Fee offset included	RTP Fee Offset
d. PhD and/or Master Research Degrees available	PhD only
e. Part-Time Available	No

Eligibility

Domestic Applicants

To be eligible for this scholarship, domestic applicants must:

- Be Australian residents (all domestic students including Australian citizens, Australian permanent residents, New Zealand citizens and holders of permanent Australian humanitarian visas)
- Meet the minimum academic entry and English language requirements for admission to the degree – see [website](#) for further details

- Not already have completed a research degree at the same or higher Australian Quality Framework (AQF) (or equivalent for overseas institutions)

Conditions and Benefits

Successful applicants will receive a full guide to the conditions and benefits of the Scholarships at the time of offer. The following is a summary of the main benefits and conditions.

Special Conditions

If item (f) in [Table 1](#) includes:

- the response “Yes” to the item “Intellectual Property Assignment Required” then the scholarship holder will be required to assign intellectual property they create while working on this Project (excluding copyright in the thesis) to the University through a formal agreement; or
- the response “Yes” to the item “Working Children Check Required” then the scholarship holder must be willing to obtain Working with Children Check before commencing the Project and Scholarship; or
- the Response “Yes” to the item Police Check Required, then the scholarship holder will be required to secure a Police Check before commencing Project and Scholarship; or

Scholarship Value

Stipend Value

The annual value of the stipend is provided in Item (a) Value of Stipend per Annum in [Table 2](#) and are currently exempt from taxation.

If Item (b) of [Table 2](#) is marked as “Incremented” then stipend payments are indexed annually.

Fee Offset Value

Domestic Applicants

In 2026, the value of this the Fee Offset component of a Scholarship is \$14,000 - \$16,750 per research period depending on the course.

Period of Support

All candidates are expected to complete their study in the timely duration for their degree as per [Table 3](#).

Table 3: Stipend durations for full-time Higher Degrees by Research

	Stipend Duration	Timely Duration
Doctor of Philosophy	3.5 years	4 years

Periods of study already undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the award will be deducted from the normal period of award tenure. Similarly, periods of study undertaken during suspension of the award, or undertaken during the tenure of a previous Research Training Program Stipend or Australian Postgraduate Award, will be deducted from the maximum period of tenure.

A Scholarship holder may be required to pay tuition fees for any period of enrolment in excess of the timely duration.

Employment

Stipend candidates are expected to normally study and research full-time (minimum of 36.75 hours per week) between the hours of 8.00am – 6.00pm Monday to Friday with Stipend candidates limited to a maximum of eight (8) hours paid employment per week during these hours. Please refer to the [Higher Degree by Research Scholarship Procedure](#).

Employment must not interfere with the candidate's progress.

Commencement

No deferrals of the Scholarship will be considered. All successful applicants are expected to commence study by the Commencement Date advised in the Letter of Offer. The Commencement Date will normally be the Expected Commencement Date in Item (a) of [Table 2 Project Outline](#), however the University reserves the right to change the Commencement Date in the Letter of Offer when offering a scholarship.

If an applicant cannot start by the Commencement Date, the offer of the Scholarship may be withdrawn.

Part-time Scholarships

If Item (e) of [Table 2](#) is marked "Yes" then Funding Agency requirements for the Project mean that the scholarship can be offered for part-time study.

Domestic Applicants

The University may approve a part-time award where an applicant can demonstrate heavy care commitments or a medical condition which precludes full-time study. The award holder must demonstrate one of the following:

- care responsibilities for a pre-school child, or
- care responsibilities for school aged children as a sole parent with limited access to outside support, or
- care responsibilities for an invalid or disabled spouse, child or parent, or
- a medical condition which limits the capacity to undertake full-time study (supported by medical certification).

A part-time award holder is expected to progress at half the rate of a full-time award holder. Award holders approved to study part-time may revert to full-time study at any time.

Stipends for part-time awards are **NOT** tax exempt. A Tax File Number Form is required to be completed together with supporting documentation detailing the care commitment or medical condition.

Scholarship Selection Procedures

Eligibility

All applications are assessed against the Domestic Applicants criteria for the scholarship scheme. Those applications deemed ineligible for a scholarship will not be processed any further and ineligible applicants will be notified of the result.

Ranking against the selection criteria

The Project Supervisor will rank eligible applications based on academic merit, relevant research experience, publications and relevant work experience. They may identify applications which are not for further consideration (NFFC).

The Project Supervisor may contact an applicant directly for more detail regarding their application.

The Project Supervisor may organise an interview with an applicant to discuss their suitability.

Outcomes

The Project Supervisor/s, in consultation with the Institute Associate Director (Research Training), will determine the successful applicant.

Appeals

A request to review a scholarship decision must be lodged in writing dean.gradresearch@vu.edu.au within 10 University business days of the applicant being informed of the decision.

A review of a scholarship decision is available in circumstances where unsuccessful applicants believe there was a breach of process in the handling of their application;

The Dean, Graduate Research will undertake, or arrange a review if there is a conflict of interest, of the decision and a written outcome will be provided within 10 University business days of the date that the request was received by VU. If there are any delays to the timeline for any outcome, the Dean, Graduate Research will advise the applicant the reason for the delay and the date that they may receive an outcome of the review.

Application Submission

Expressions of interest should be submitted to **Professor Camilla Brockett**, with the following documentation attached:

- 500-word research proposal
- Academic transcripts
- Qualification certificates
- **200-word personal statement** – include your reasons for wanting to undertake this research, and your academic path or trajectory
- Up-to-date CV

The successful applicant will be required to submit a formal application through the Victoria University Admissions portal and meet all University requirements for admission and enrolment. Refer to the steps at **Apply For Graduate Research**

For more information

Please contact: **Camilla.Brockett@vu.edu.au**