

Graduate Scholarship Application Guide 2017 (Domestic and International Applicants)

This guide is for applicants for a postgraduate research scholarship commencing in 2017 at Victoria University. This guide is for all applicants including Australian citizens, or for those who have been granted permanent resident status, including New Zealand citizens who are granted permanent residency status on arrival, and international applicants.

Applicants should note we receive a large number of applications and each round is highly competitive. Applications are assessed and ranked based on academic merit. It is expected that, as with previous rounds, successful applicants will be those with academic marks over 80% average (on the VU Grading scale or equivalent). Priority will be given to applicants who pursue a research degree in one of Victoria University's areas of research focus. Further information on the areas of research focus can be found here: <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-focus-areas>.

Victoria University has five postgraduate scholarship schemes:

- Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA)
- Victoria University Postgraduate Research Scholarships (VUPRS)
- Victoria University International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (VUIPRS)
- International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS)
- Victoria University Postgraduate Diversity Scholarships

In addition to the above postgraduate scholarship schemes, domestic PhD applicants who are successful in obtaining an APA are automatically assessed for the **Vice Chancellor's Graduate Research Award**. For consideration for the Vice Chancellor's Graduate Research Award, applicants must be undertaking a PhD research project in one of Victoria University's areas of research focus. The Vice Chancellor's Graduate Research Award is a top-up award

Applicants need only submit one application to be considered for a postgraduate research scholarship commencing 2017.

All scholarships include tuition fees and a stipend for the duration of the award.

Scholarship/Award	Annual Stipend Value*	Open for**
Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)	\$26,288	Domestic applicants only
VU Postgraduate Research Scholarship (VUPRS)	\$26,288	Domestic applicants only
VU International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (VUIPRS)	\$26,288	International applicants only
International Postgraduate Research Scholarship	\$26,288	International applicants only
VU Diversity Postgraduate Research Scholarship (VUDPRS)	\$26,288	Domestic applicants only
Vice-Chancellor's Graduate Research Award	\$35,000***	All successful APAs

*APA, VUPRS, VUIPRS, VUDPRS and IPRS are indexed annually. Figure given is 2016 rate.
 **See details of eligibility below
 ***APA of \$26,288 per annum plus top-up of \$8,712 per annum for 2016. Capped at \$35,000 per annum for duration of the degree.

Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)

Australian Postgraduate Awards (APAs) are awarded to postgraduate researchers on the basis of academic merit and research potential.

Eligibility

To be eligible for an APA, applicants must:

- ◆ Be Australian citizens, **OR** have been granted permanent resident status
(This includes New Zealand citizens who are granted permanent residency status on arrival)
- ◆ Have completed at least four years of tertiary education studies at a high level of achievement. For example:
 - a four year undergraduate degree (e.g. Engineering or Law)
 - a three year degree and an Honours year
 - a three year degree and one year of a higher degree
 - a three year course and one year of a Masters preliminary or other qualifying program
 - or a three year degree and a postgraduate diploma
- ◆ Have achieved **First Class Honours or equivalent results** (80% or higher on VU Grading Scale)
- ◆ Be undertaking a Masters by Research or Doctoral research degree in 2017
- ◆ Enrol as a full-time student
(Part-time awards may be available for compelling social or medical reasons)
- ◆ Have their enrolment into the proposed degree approved by the institution

You are **NOT ELIGIBLE** for an APA if you:

- ◆ If you have not achieved First Class Honours or equivalent results
- ◆ Have already completed a degree at the same level as the proposed candidature or at a higher level
- ◆ Have held an APA or APA (Industry) previously unless it was terminated within six months of the commencement of benefits
- ◆ Are receiving another equivalent award, scholarship or salary to undertake the proposed program
(“equivalent” stipend is regarded as more than \$17,000 per annum)

Priority

Priority will be given to applicants who are pursuing research in one of Victoria University's areas of research focus.

- Successful APA applicants are assessed for the **Vice Chancellor's Graduate Research Award**. Applicants for the Vice Chancellor's Graduate Research Award must be undertaking a research project in one of Victoria University's areas of research focus. The Vice Chancellor's Graduate Research Awards are awarded to postgraduate doctoral researchers on the basis of academic merit, research potential and fit with one of Victoria University's areas of research focus. Subject to the availability of funding, Victoria University expects to offer *up to five* Vice Chancellor's Graduate Research Awards commencing in 2017.

VU Postgraduate Research Scholarship (VUPRS)

Victoria University Postgraduate Research Scholarships are awarded to postgraduate researchers on the basis of academic merit and research potential.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a VU Postgraduate Research Scholarship, applicants must:

- ◆ Be Australian citizens, **OR** have been granted permanent resident status
(This includes New Zealand citizens who are granted permanent residency status on arrival)
- ◆ Have completed a four year undergraduate degree, or equivalent. For example:
 - a four year undergraduate degree (e.g. Engineering or Law)
 - a three year degree and an Honours year
 - a three year degree and one year of a higher degree
 - a three year course and one year of a Masters preliminary or other qualifying program

- or a three year degree and a postgraduate diploma

(Please note that competition for these awards is intense. Those awarded these scholarships in recent years have held degrees at First Class Honours level, or equivalent)

- ◆ Be undertaking a Masters by Research or Doctoral research degree in 2016
- ◆ Enrol as a full-time student
(Part-time awards may be available for compelling social or medical reasons)

You are **NOT ELIGIBLE** for a VU Scholarship if you:

- ◆ Have already completed a degree at the same level as the proposed candidature or at a higher level
- ◆ Have held any Victoria University Postgraduate Research Scholarship previously unless it was terminated within six months of the commencement of benefits
- ◆ Are receiving another equivalent award, scholarship or salary to undertake the proposed program ("equivalent" stipend is regarded as more than \$17,000 per annum)

Priority

Priority will be given to applicants who are pursuing research in one of Victoria University's areas of research focus.

Victoria University Diversity Scholarship (VU Diversity Scholarship)

The VU Diversity Graduate Research Scholarship provides living allowance support to promising researchers wishing to undertake a graduate research degree. It is designed to increase the diversity of graduate researchers at VU.

VU is committed to encouraging participation in graduate research of people whose educational opportunities have been disrupted or adversely affected by their life circumstances.

Applicants must meet the diversity eligibility criteria to be considered for this scholarship.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a Diversity Scholarship, applicants must:

- ◆ Be Australian citizens, **OR** have been granted permanent resident status
(This includes New Zealand citizens who are granted permanent residency status on arrival)
- ◆ Can provide evidence that you have experienced one or more of the following that have disrupted or adversely affected your studies:
 - ◆ Traumatic events beyond your control
 - ◆ Significant illness and/or disability
 - ◆ Socioeconomic and/or family circumstances
- ◆ Have completed a four year undergraduate degree, or equivalent. For example:
 - a four year undergraduate degree (e.g. Engineering or Law)
 - a three year degree and an Honours year
 - a three year degree and a postgraduate diploma
 - a three year degree and one year of a higher degree
- ◆ Be undertaking a Masters by Research or Doctoral research degree in 2017
- ◆ Enrol as a full-time student
(Part-time awards may be available for compelling social or medical reasons)
- ◆ Have had their enrolment into the proposed degree approved by the institution

You are **NOT ELIGIBLE** for a Diversity Scholarship if you:

- ◆ Have already completed a degree at the same or higher level as the proposed candidature
- ◆ Have held any Victoria University Postgraduate Research Scholarship previously unless it was terminated within six months of the commencement of benefits
- ◆ Are receiving another equivalent award, scholarship or salary to undertake the proposed program
(*equivalent* stipend is regarded as more than \$17,000 per annum)

In addition to providing supporting evidence, you must submit a confidential statement of no more than one page, outlining how your circumstances have adversely affected your studies and academic career.

Applicants may also apply for the VU Diversity Postgraduate Research Scholarship under the category of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ASTI)*. VU recognises that indigenous Australians are under-represented in graduate research studies and encourages qualified indigenous applicants to undertake their research studies at VU.

*If you are a prospective Indigenous Australian applicant, you are encouraged to submit a VU Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ASTI) Profile Information form in conjunction with your scholarship application:

<http://www.vu.edu.au/sites/default/files/student-connections/pdfs/A124-ATSI-profile-information.pdf>

Priority

Priority may be given to applicants who are pursuing research in one of Victoria University's areas of research focus.

International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) and Victoria University International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (VUIPRS)

The purpose of the International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) and the Victoria University International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (VUIPRS) is to support high quality research by assisting students with excellent academic qualifications who wish to participate in postgraduate research programs in Australia. These scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic merit and it should be noted that the competition is intense and only those applicants with outstanding academic results are likely to be successful.

The International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) covers the full tuition costs, overseas student health cover and a VU International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (VUIPRS) which provides a living allowance of \$26,288 per annum (2016 rate) - see Conditions and Benefits for further information.

The Victoria University International Research Scholarship (VUIPRS) provides a living allowance of \$26,288 per annum (2016 rate). In addition, successful applicants will be awarded a 100% Tuition Fees Scholarship which provides a waiver of tuition fees for the duration of the course- see Conditions and Benefits for further information.

Eligibility

To be eligible for an IPRS and VUIPRS, applicants must:

- ◆ Be a citizen of any country other than Australia or New Zealand.
- ◆ Have completed a four year undergraduate degree, or equivalent. For example:
 - a four year undergraduate degree (e.g. Engineering or Law);
 - a three year degree and an Honours year;
 - a three year degree and a postgraduate diploma at an advanced level; or
 - a three year degree and one year of a higher degree.
- ◆ Meet the University's academic entrance requirements for enrolment into a research degree - see website: <http://www.vu.edu.au/international-students/apply-and-accept/entry-requirements> for further details.
- ◆ Meet the University's English language proficiency requirements for enrolment in a research degree – see website: <http://www.vu.edu.au/international-students/apply-and-accept/entry-requirements> for further details.
- ◆ Be commencing a Masters by Research or Doctoral degree in 2017.

- ◆ Enrol as a full-time student.
- ◆ Priority will be given to applicants who pursue a program of study in one of Victoria University's areas of research focus: <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-focus-areas>

You are **NOT ELIGIBLE** for an IPRS or VUIPRS if you:

- ◆ Have already obtained a PhD degree or equivalent.
- ◆ Have already obtained a Masters degree by Research and are proposing to undertake another Masters degree by Research.
- ◆ Have previously held an IPRS, VUIPRS or OPRS (unless it was for a Masters by Research degree, and you are applying for an IPRS to undertake PhD studies).
- ◆ Are currently studying, or have recently studied, on an AIDAB or AUSAID scholarship and are applying for an IPRS immediately following the AIDAB/AUSAID funded studies.

You **MAY NOT** be eligible if you have already enrolled for more than one semester in the degree for which you are applying for IPRS and VUIPRS funding. Please contact the Scholarships Coordinator via researchscholarships@vu.edu.au if this is your situation.

Conditions and Benefits (Domestic awardees)

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

Scholarship Allowance

Scholarship/Award	Annual Stipend Value*
Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)	\$25,849
VU Postgraduate Research Scholarship (VUPRS)	\$25,849
VU International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (VUIPRS)	\$25,849
International Postgraduate Research Scholarship	\$25,849
VU Diversity Postgraduate Research Scholarship (VUDPRS)	\$25,849
Vice-Chancellor's Graduate Research Award	\$35,000
*APA, VUPRS, VUIPRS, VUDPRS and IPRS are indexed annually. Figure given is 2015 rate.	

- Please note that the **Vice Chancellor's Graduate Research Award** remains capped at a top-up to \$35,000 per annum irrespective of any change in the APA rate in future years.
- All new full time APA, and VU scholarships are indexed annually as per agreed Government rates and are currently tax-exempt.
- The part-time rate (only applicable in approved exceptional circumstances) of \$13,144 per annum (2016 rate for APA, and VU) are also indexed annually but are NOT tax exempt.

Holders of Vice Chancellor's, APA, and VU scholarships may:

- Be in receipt of minor award, allowances or other earnings which are supplementary to a scholarship, or derived from part-time work within the guidelines set out by Victoria University
- Receive stipend top up funding from industry, or obtain from a non-Commonwealth source, provision for fieldwork, equipment and other such expenses not covered by the scholarship. Funds towards overseas travel costs may be obtained from Commonwealth awards or other sources.

Research Training Scheme (RTS) place

In addition to the scholarship allowance provided for any of the domestic above scholarships, each scholarship holder will receive an RTS Place. This will exempt the scholarship holder from paying tuition fees for the duration of the scholarship. Successful recipients will still have to pay the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) every semester.

Intellectual Property

Applicants should note that they may be required to assign intellectual property they create while working on certain research projects to the University through a formal agreement.

Duration of the Scholarship

For applicants commencing their enrolment in a research degree, the scholarship is normally for three years for Doctoral studies and two years for Masters by research studies.

For applicants who are currently enrolled in the Masters or Doctoral degree for which they are seeking the scholarship, the period of enrolment already completed in the degree will be deducted from the duration of the scholarship. This includes prior enrolment in a Masters degree where a Masters enrolment has been converted to a Doctoral enrolment.

A scholarship extension of up to six months may be granted to Doctoral candidates where the University is satisfied that the extension is based on grounds which are beyond the control of the candidate and are related to the research rather than of a personal nature. Scholarship extensions are not possible for Masters by research candidates. All students are expected to complete their study in the minimum time for their degree.

Employment

Students are paid to study on a full-time basis and are only permitted to undertake a strictly limited amount of employment. Students are not permitted to undertake additional paid work for than a maximum of 15 working hours on average in any one week. Employment must not interfere with the student's progress.

Commencement

All successful applicants are expected to commence study by 31 March 2017.

A late commencement, up to 30 August 2017, may be granted where employment commitments or circumstances beyond the applicant's control prevent the applicant from commencing by 31 March 2017. Approval for a late commencement must be sought in writing by the applicant, providing full details of the reasons for the request, before 31 March 2017.

If an applicant cannot start by 31 March 2017, and approval has not been obtained for late commencement prior to 31 March 2017, the scholarship will be withdrawn. If an applicant has not commenced by 30 August 2017, for any reason whatsoever and whether or not approval for late commencement has been obtained, the scholarship will be withdrawn.

Part-time Scholarships

Part-time scholarships may be available to those who are unable to study full-time for all or part of their candidature. Part-time scholarships can only be approved only in the following specific instances:

Where the scholarship holder has:

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

Part-time scholarships are **NOT** available to applicants who wish to study part-time in order to undertake full or part-time employment. Part-time scholarship holders are subject to the same restrictions on employment as full-time scholarship holders. Applicants wishing to be considered for a part-time scholarship must meet the criteria listed above. Applicants must provide evidence of the reason(s) they are unable to study full time. They also require the agreement of the supervisor and the University to the part-time arrangements.

Conditions and Benefits (International awardees)

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

Scholarship Benefits - International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS)

Recipients of an IPRS award at VU receive an award with two components. A government funded IPRS award which provides payment of annual course tuition fees for the duration of the scholarship and a living allowance funded by VU or through an Australian Postgraduate Award. The Australian Commonwealth Government (DIISRTE) will pay the full fee of the course of study to the institution on behalf of the student. IPRS holders are required to join the Overseas Student Health Care Cover (OSHC) scheme. DIISRTE will pay the costs of this health cover for holders of IPRS and their dependants, for the duration of the scholarship. VU provides a living allowance of \$26,288 per annum (2016 rate) is paid for the duration of the scholarship.

The following are NOT included under the IPRS:

- travel costs
- the cost of English language testing
- the cost of bridging programs or English language programs

Scholarship Benefits - Victoria University International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (VUIPRS)

Recipients of the VUIPRS receive a living allowance of \$26,288 per annum (2016 rate) for the duration of the scholarship. In addition, each recipient receives a 100% International Tuition Fees Scholarship to cover tuition fees for the duration of the scholarship.

The following are NOT included under the VUIPRS:

- the cost of English language testing
- the cost of bridging programs or English language programs
- Overseas Student Health Care Cover (OSHC) scheme
- Travel costs from overseas

Intellectual Property

Applicants should note that they may be required to assign intellectual property they create while working on certain research projects to the University through a formal agreement.

Duration of the Scholarship

The IPRS and VUIPRS are normally provided for 36 months for Doctoral studies and 24 months for Masters studies. Students are expected to complete their study in the minimum time for their course.

Doctoral scholarship holders have provision in the living stipend component for **ONE** extension for a maximum of six months for a Doctoral student only.

A maximum of **TWO** extensions to the course length of Doctoral studies (granted in blocks of six months full-time – 12 months in total) may be granted where the University is satisfied that the extension is based on grounds that are beyond the control of the candidate and related to the research rather than of a personal nature.

Employment

Students are paid to study on a full-time basis and are only permitted to undertake a strictly limited amount of employment, depending on their visa conditions. Students are not permitted to undertake additional paid work for more than a maximum of 15 working hours on average in any one week. Employment must not interfere with the student's progress.

Commencement

Successful applicants are required to commence their research program in March 2017 and no later than 31 August 2017.

A late commencement, up to 30 August 2017, may be granted where commitments or circumstances beyond the applicant's control prevent the applicant from commencing by 31 March 2017. Approval for a late commencement must be sought in writing by the applicant, providing full details of the reasons for the request, before 31 March 2017.

Scholarship Selection Procedures

Eligibility

Applications are assessed against the eligibility criteria for each of the scholarship schemes or awards that are available. . Only those applications that are deemed eligible and have the formal support of an appropriately registered supervisor will be forwarded to College committees for further assessment and ranking.

Due to increased competition in recent years applicants are requested to provide transcripts with actual marks whenever possible. These marks may be used to distinguish between applicants of high academic merit if necessary.

Academic merit and research alignment

Colleges rank applications on the basis of academic merit resulting in a College Order of Merit list.

Only First Class Honours or equivalent applicants are ranked for the APA.

Only First Class Honours applicants will be ranked for the Vice Chancellor's scholarships.

First Class Honours is not an eligibility requirement for the VU scholarship; however, with the number of applicants in recent years, many successful recipients have had First Class Honours or equivalent.

Students with the following qualifications are automatically classed as First Class Honours applicants:

- *Australian and New Zealand Bachelors Degree with First Class Honours*
- *Australian and New Zealand Research Masters Preliminary formally graded as First Class Honours*
- *Australian and New Zealand Research Masters Degree formally graded as First Class Honours*

Where an applicant does not hold one of the above qualifications, but the College believes that the applicant has qualifications and/or research experience equivalent to First Class Honours, an assessment of equivalence is determined. The following are examples of qualifications requiring assessment:

- *Bachelors Degree with 2nd class honours as the highest qualification*
- *Research Masters Preliminary without a formal First Class Honours grade*
- *Research Masters Degree without a formal First Class Honours grade*
- *Coursework Masters Degree*
- *Graduate Diploma*
- *All overseas qualifications (except New Zealand)*
- *Other non-standard H1 Bachelors qualifications*

A University Ranking Committee reviews the College Order of Merit lists to determine a University-wide Order of Merit list to identify those applicants that are successful. All available scholarships are allocated. An assessment is made of successful applicants for the Vice Chancellor's Graduate Research Awards.

The final ranking and scholarship/award allocation is completed in the early of December. All applicants will receive written notification of the result of their scholarship application **after** mid December 2016.

Successful applicants in receipt of an offer from another university, but who wish to take up their offer with Victoria University, may request, within no more five than working days of receiving their offer from Victoria University, in writing that Victoria University consider their alternative offer and make a counter-offer. Within no more than five working days, Victoria University will respond in writing to the successful applicant with its decision and offer, if applicable, a counter-offer. Successful applicants with a counter-offer from Victoria University must communicate, in writing, their intention to take up the counter-offer within five working days of receiving the counter-offer. Counter-offers from Victoria University will be considered. Academic merit and available funding will impact the number of counter offers that can be made to successful applicants.

Appeals

Appeals can only be lodged against process issues and not against Committee decisions or ranking. Appeals against the outcome of scholarship applications must be made in writing to the Chair, Scholarship Ranking Committee within 14 days of the applicant being notified of the outcome. Applicants must explain the basis of their appeal and provide relevant documentation and evidence to support the appeal. The appeals process will be carried out by an independent Senior University Officer who is not a member of any College or University Scholarship Ranking Committee that has considered the scholarship applications in a particular year. The Senior University Officer appointed will consider the appeal and advise the applicant of their decision in writing.

Application Submission

International applications open at the start of August 2016 and close at 5.00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time on **Friday 30 September 2016**.

Domestic applications open at the start of September 2016 and close at 5.00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time **Friday 28 October 2016**.

Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

SEND YOUR APPLICATION AND ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TO:

EMAIL: domesticscholarships@vu.edu.au

EMAIL: internationalscholarships@vu.edu.au

Referee reports must be submitted via email to referee.reports@vu.edu.au

Further Assistance and Enquiries

Further enquiries can be made to the Research Scholarships Coordinator via email: researchscholarships@vu.edu.au