1. Introduction

1.1 The ISS Scholarship is awarded on the basis of academic merit to pay a stipend and cover tuition expenses for eligible international students.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Academic requirements

To be eligible for an ISS, an applicant must meet all of the following requirements:

(a) have completed at least four years of tertiary education study at a high level of achievement with a research component. For example, a:

• four-year degree with honours;

• three-year degree and an honours year;

• three-year degree and one year of a Masters preliminary or other qualifying programme; or

• three-year degree and a postgraduate program with a research component.

(b) have obtained First Class Honours or equivalent results. In regards to equivalence the University may also consider previous study, relevant work experience, research publications, referee reports and other research experience.

(c) be undertaking or accepted into a higher degree by research at the university.

(d) be enrolled as a full-time student upon commencement of their award.

(e) have their enrolment in the proposed higher degree programme accepted by the university before being ranked for an offer of an ISS.

2.2 Citizenship and Visa Requirements

(a) Be considered an International student for the length of candidature, as defined by the Higher Education Support Act (2003).

(b) Meet International student visa requirements as specified by DIAC, including maintaining a standard Overseas Student Health Cover policy as approved by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.
2.3 Selection Process

The university is required to select eligible applications on the basis of academic merit and through a competitive selection process. Applications will be referred to the Research Training Standing Committee for assessment and applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application at the conclusion of the ranking process.

When considering First Class Honours equivalence (2.1(b) above), the University may:

(a) select applicants presenting other qualifications and/or highly relevant work experience as equating to First Class Honours, provided the ISS guidelines are followed and justification for the rating is provided;

(b) assess other qualifications as equating to a First Class Honours degree, including advanced postgraduate diplomas and Masters by coursework degrees with at least a 25% research component.

(c) take into account research publications and research performance

2.4 Offer of an Award

When the university offers an award to a successful applicant, it will provide the conditions of award to the candidate along with the offer letter.

3. Tenure

3.1 An ISS is initially granted for 3 years at doctoral level and 2 years at Masters level.

3.2 Awardees who hold a two year ISS at Masters level and who apply successfully to transfer their candidature to Doctorate level will have their scholarship extended for a further year.

3.3 Extension of an Award

3.3.1 A doctoral candidate may apply for a maximum extension of up to six months subject to satisfactory progress, provided the grounds for extension are related to study and are beyond the control of the candidate.

3.3.2 No extensions are possible for Master's candidates.

3.4 Completion of a Master’s Degree

3.4.1 An ISS holder completing a research Master’s degree may continue the award for Doctoral research studies provided that there is no interval between Master’s and Doctoral candidature.

NOTE: the maximum period of an ISS for a candidate progressing from Master’s to Doctoral research candidature is three years from the date the student took up the award as a Master’s candidate.
3.5 Suspension of an ISS

3.5.1 ISS holders are not permitted to suspend the ISS award as per obligations which exist under the student visa system.

3.6 Eligibility for concurrent awards, scholarships or salaries

ISS holders may receive a concurrent award, scholarship or salary to undertake their research higher degree if:

• The concurrent award, scholarship or salary provides a benefit of less than 75% of the base ISS stipend rate; or

Income earned from sources unrelated to the course of study is not subject to the 75% rule.

4. Stipends and Allowances

4.1 Living Allowance
An ISS carries a living allowance of $25,000 per annum, paid in fortnightly instalments. Tuition fees shall also be covered for a period of three years. An ISS shall normally be commenced no later than 31 March in a given year.

4.2 Thesis Allowance

4.2.1 An allowance, to be determined by the university, will be paid upon presentation of original receipts to the Graduate Research Office.

4.2.2 The thesis allowance must be claimed within one year of the submission of the thesis for an examination and no more than 2 years after termination of the award.

4.2.3 The amount paid will be up to the maximum rate applicable at the time of submission of the thesis.

4.2.4 The allowance is a contribution to the costs of production of the thesis (i.e. typing support, photocopying, and binding) and does not include costs such as purchase of computer equipment.

4.2.5 The thesis allowance is payable for costs associated with submission of a thesis, or the lodgement of bound copies of the thesis following approval, provided that the claim is made within one year of the resubmission date or lodgement date. The combined total of allowances for submission and final submission must not exceed the approved maximum amount.

4.2.6 In exceptional circumstances, students may apply for a waiver of the relevant time limit on claiming the thesis allowance with any decision remaining at the discretion of the university. Any waiver of the time limit must be approved by the RTSC, subject to it being satisfied that the exceptional circumstances were beyond the candidate’s control and warrant an extension of the period in which a thesis allowance may be claimed.
4.2.7 The award of an ISS does not cover annual student services charges. Candidates are responsible for paying such charges themselves.

5. Transfer of an ISS to another institution

An ISS cannot be transferred to another institution, given that it is an ACU award.

6. Leave Arrangements

Leave arrangements for international students will be subject to the conditions of student visas as outlined by the Department of Immigration. In general a student will be entitled to:

6.1 Recreation Leave

6.1.1 ISS holders will receive up to twenty (20) days paid recreation leave each year of the award calculated on a pro-rata basis within the period of the award.
6.1.2 Recreation leave may be accrued but must be taken during the tenure of the award. Payment in lieu of taking annual recreation leave is not permitted.
6.1.3 ISS holders will forfeit any unused leave remaining when an award is terminated or completed.

6.2 Sick Leave

6.2.1 ISS holders may receive up to ten (10) days sick leave each year of the award and this may be accrued over the tenure of the award.

Research Candidates who experience periods of extended illness, ie greater than two weeks, may suspend their award and candidature. Any suspension and absence will be reported by the university and may result in the termination of a student visa. Candidates should seek advice from the ACU International Office.

7. Academic Progress

ISS holders must submit regular progress reports as and when required by the institution. The university is required to terminate the awards of candidates who fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress.

8. Suspension of an ISS

The suspension of the ISS award can only be granted in accord with Australian International Immigration Rules. Any suspension and absence will be reported by the university and may result in the termination of a student visa. Candidates should seek advice from the ACU International Office.

9.1 ISS holders may undertake part-time work subject to conditions determined by the university. The university must be satisfied that any approved part-time work does not interfere with the student’s study programme and does not contravene student visa conditions.

9.2 ISS holders are permitted to:

(a) obtain funds for fieldwork, equipment or other expenses not covered by the award;

(b) obtain funding for overseas travel costs from other Australian Government awards or any other source; and

(c) receive income derived from part-time work undertaken within the guidelines set by the University. (See Section 9.4 below)

9.3 There is no limit on how much income an award holder can receive from part-time work. However, this income will not be tax exempt.

9.4 An ISS holder may undertake part-time work subject to conditions determined by the university. The university must be satisfied that any approved part-time work does not interfere with the student’s study programme.

9.5 ISS with stipend holders may undertake a strictly limited amount of part-time work subject to conditions determined by the university. Part-time work shall not exceed an average of EIGHT (8) hours in a working week, which is defined as the period between the hours of 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

9.6 Such part-time employment must not interfere with an award holder’s research programme or academic progress.

10. Postgraduate Student Obligations

10.1 All postgraduate students are obliged to be familiar with and abide by relevant State and Commonwealth Privacy Legislation, in particular the Information Privacy Principles of the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1998. These are available at: http://www.privacy.gov.au/materials/types/infosheets/view/6541

10.2 All postgraduate students are also obliged to be familiar with and abide by:

• the University Regulations governing their candidature;

• the University’s Code of Conduct of Research;

• the University’s Intellectual Property Policy;

• the National Health and Medical Research Council codes on human and animal experimentation;
• the Australian Government Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee guidelines for research;
• Commonwealth and State regulations and guidelines governing research involving ionizing radiation, and access to and handling of hazardous or restricted substances.

Newly enrolling candidates must apply for the relevant ethics/safety approval as soon as they have developed their research proposal (including: research design, methodology and research instrument).

Currently enrolled candidates accepting an Award must provide a copy of the approval from the Research Projects Ethics Committee and a copy of the annual renewal if the approval was granted more than 12 months previously.

10.3 Candidates should also be fully aware of their obligations regarding contact with their supervisors, and the need to submit written material and academic progress reports as and when required. They shall also be diligent in pursuing their research and in completing their candidature as soon as possible.

11. Termination of an Award

11.1 The university must terminate an ISS:
(a) if, in the opinion of the university, the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of the ISS, and no suitable alternative arrangements can be made for continuation of the postgraduate degree; or
(b) if, a university determines that a student is guilty of serious academic misconduct, including the provision of false or misleading information;
(c) when the candidate ceases to be a full-time candidate;
(d) on completion of the course, or the death, incapacity, resignation or withdrawal of the candidate; or
(e) if the award holder fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress; and/or
(f) if the ISS holder accepts another equivalent award, scholarship or salary to undertake their research higher degree providing a greater than 75% of the base ISS stipend rate and the ISS holder does not comply with the requirements of Section 3.7 above.

11.2 If an ISS is terminated, it cannot be reactivated unless the termination occurred in error.

12. Appeal Procedures

12.1 Students may appeal to the University Research Training Standing Committee (RTSC) for the resolution of any disputes that may arise concerning the award.
12.2 Appeals will only be heard on claims of procedural deficiencies in the assessment process and in accordance with the appeals process outlined in the Research and Professional Degree Regulations.