1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 ACU offers a Postgraduate Research Scholarship to support an Indigenous person to undertake either a master-by-research or doctoral degree program. The Scholarship is provided to assist with general living costs.

1.2 Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarships are awarded by the University Research Training Standing Committee (RTSC) to conduct research in any area of study in which postgraduate supervision is available.

2. **ELIGIBILITY**

2.1 Applicants must be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

2.2 Academic Requirements

To be eligible for an ACU Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship, 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 upper second 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 ACU;

(d) be enrolled as a full-time student upon commencement of their award or, in exceptional circumstances, be granted approval by the University for a part-time award in line with the criteria detailed in section 3.2; and

(e) have their enrolment in the proposed higher degree programme accepted by the University before being ranked for an offer of an Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship.

Applicants are **ineligible** for an Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship if they:

(a) have held an Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship, unless it was terminated within six months of the commencement of benefits; or
(b) are currently receiving another equivalent award, scholarship or salary to undertake the research higher degree, providing benefit greater than 75% of the base Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship stipend rate.

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 RTSC for assessment and applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application at the conclusion of the ranking process.

When considering upper second 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 upper second class honours, provided the Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship guidelines are followed and justification for the rating is provided;

(b) assess other qualifications as equating to an upper second class honours degree, including advanced postgraduate diplomas and masters-by-coursework degrees with at least a 25% research component; and

(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.

2.5 Eligibility for Part-Time Awards

The University may approve a part-time Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship for a student only if the student has exceptional circumstances. The University must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances relate to significant caring commitments or a medical condition which limits the student’s capacity to undertake full-time study.

A student who has a part-time Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship may revert to full-time study at any time with the permission of the University.

Part-time awards are not available to applicants seeking to undertake paid employment on a full-time or on a substantial part-time basis.

Note: Substantial part-time work is regarded as being more than the University would permit its full-time award holders to undertake without interfering with their study programmes.
3. **TENURE**

3.1 **Full-Time Awards**

3.1.1 A full-time Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship with Stipend may be held for three years for research doctoral degree (e.g. PhD or EdD) studies or for two years for master-by-research (e.g. MPhil, MEdR, MHSc and MThR) degree studies.

3.1.2 Periods of study already undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the award will be deducted from the maximum period of tenure.

3.2 **Part Time Awards**

3.2.1 In approving a part-time award, the University must be satisfied that the award holder's circumstances are such that it would not be reasonable to expect a student to study on a full-time basis and that there may be a caring commitment or medical condition which would impinge upon the ability of the candidate to meet the normal full-time requirement.

3.2.2 The tenure for part-time awards is six years for research doctoral degree programmes and four years for master-by-research degree programmes.

3.2.3 Part-time awards are not available to applicants seeking to undertake paid employment on a full-time, or on a substantial part-time basis, and recipients are subject to the same restrictions on employment as full-time Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holders.

3.2.4 A part-time award holder is expected to progress at half the rate of a full-time award holder and extensions are possible for doctoral candidates. No extensions are possible for part-time master-by-research candidates.

3.2.5 Award holders approved to study part-time may revert to full-time study at any time with the permission of the University.

3.2.6 Stipends for part-time awards are not tax exempt. The part-time rate is adjusted for taxation so that part-time award holders receive half the amount paid to full-time award holders.

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 **Changing between Master-by-Research and Doctoral Studies**

The RTSC may approve, on the recommendation of the Associate Dean (Research), conversion of an Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship with stipend for master-by-research degree study to an Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship with stipend leading to a research doctorate. Similarly, an award for doctoral
studies can be converted to a master-by-research research award providing that the maximum tenure of the degree has not been exceeded. Any period of candidature completed will be deducted from the maximum tenure of the degree.

3.5 Completion of a Master-by-Research Degree

3.5.1 An Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holder completing a master-by-research degree may continue the award for doctoral research studies provided that there is no interval between master-by-research and doctoral candidature, or that such an interval is covered by suspension of the award.

3.5.2 Because an award normally expires on completion of a programme, the candidate should ensure that the progression to a research doctorate or suspension of the award is arranged before the master-by-research studies are completed.

Note: The maximum period of an Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship for a candidate progressing from master-by-research to doctoral research candidature is three years from the date the student took up the award as a master-by-research candidate.

3.6 Suspension of an Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship

3.6.1 Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holders may apply to the University for a suspension of their award for up to 12 months. The approval of suspensions is at the discretion of the University.

3.6.2 In exceptional cases, candidates may apply for suspensions beyond 12 months. Any suspensions beyond 12 months must be approved by the RTSC, subject to it being satisfied that the exceptional circumstances are beyond the student's control and warrant a further suspension of the Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship.

3.6.3 Periods of study undertaken towards the degree during suspension of the Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship must be deducted from the maximum period of its tenure.

3.7 Eligibility for Concurrent Awards, Scholarships or Salaries

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

(a) the concurrent award, scholarship or salary provides a benefit of less than 75% of the base Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship stipend rate; or

(b) the Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship is suspended for the period of concurrent award, scholarship or salary and the period of study undertaken towards the research higher degree during suspension of the Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship is deducted from the maximum period of its tenure.

Income earned from sources unrelated to the course of study is not subject to the 75% rule.
4. **STIPENDS AND ALLOWANCES**

4.1 Where a full-time Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship student is not enrolled over the full period of the year, because of a late commencement or periods of suspension, the University must provide at least the proportion of the annual stipend for the period in which study is undertaken for that year.

4.2 **Annual Stipends and Outside Work**

4.2.1 Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship stipend rates are indexed each year in accordance with Australian Postgraduate Award rates.

4.2.2 Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship 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.

4.3 **Living Allowance**

An Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship at ACU in 2015 carries a pro-rata living allowance at the base rate of $25,849 (tax exempt) per annum for both full-time doctoral and master-by-research awardees. Payments shall be made on a fortnightly basis.

4.4 **Thesis Allowance**

4.4.1 An allowance, to be determined by the University, will be paid upon presentation of original receipts to the Manager, Graduate Research, Office of the Deputy Vice- Chancellor Research.

4.4.2 The thesis allowance must be claimed within one year of the submission of the thesis for an examination.

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

4.4.4 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.

4.4.5 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.

4.4.6 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.

4.4.7 The award of an Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship does not cover annual student services charges. Candidates are responsible for paying such charges themselves.

4.5 Allowance Claims

The University will make reimbursement payments to Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship students on provision of full particulars and receipts for all other payments. Students should receive full reimbursement for the eligible claims they make, up to the approved maximum amount. This includes reimbursement for any GST amounts specified in the receipts provided.

5. RTS

All students allocated an Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship shall receive an RTS place.

6. LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS

The University may grant an Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holder the following leave entitlements:

6.1 Recreation Leave

6.1.1 Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holders will receive up to 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 Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holders will forfeit any unused leave remaining when an award is terminated or completed.

6.2 Sick Leave

6.2.1 Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holders may receive up to 10 days sick leave each year of the award and this may be accrued over the tenure of the award.

6.2.2 Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holders may also receive additional paid sick leave of up to a total of 12 weeks during their award for medically substantiated periods of illness lasting longer than 10 days.

6.2.3 Sick leave entitlements may also be extended to cover Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holders with family responsibilities caring for
sick children or relatives, subject to the usual practice of the University in relation to students on similar awards.

6.3 Maternity Leave

6.3.1 Once Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holders have completed 12 months of their award, they are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks paid maternity leave during the tenure of the award.

6.3.2 Periods of paid maternity leave are in addition to the normal duration of the Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship.

6.3.3 Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holders who have not completed 12 months of their award may access unpaid maternity leave through the suspension provisions.

6.4 Parenting Leave

6.4.1 Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holders, who are partners of women giving birth and who have completed 12 months of their award, may be entitled to a period of paid parenting leave at the time of the birth, subject to the usual practice of the University in relation to students on similar awards.

6.4.2 Periods of paid parenting leave are in addition to the normal duration of the Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship.

6.4.3 Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holders who have not completed 12 months of their award may access unpaid parenting leave through the suspension provisions.

7. ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship holders must submit regular progress reports as and when required by the institution. The University will terminate the awards of candidates who fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress.

8. TRANSFER OF AN AWARD

An Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship cannot be transferred to another institution

9. EMPLOYMENT: PART-TIME WORK

9.1 APA 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 9.2 below)

9.2 APA 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 hours in a working week, which is defined as the period between
the hours of 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

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

9.4 Holders of a part-time award are subject to the same restriction on employment
as full-time award holders.

10. POSTGRADUATE STUDENT OBLIGATIONS

10.1 All postgraduate students are obliged to be familiar with and abide by relevant
State and Commonwealth Privacy Legislation. Section 14 of the Commonwealth

10.2 All postgraduate students are also obliged to be familiar with and abide by:
(a) the University Regulations governing their candidature;
(b) the University’s Code of Conduct of Research;
(c) the University’s Intellectual Property Policy;
(d) the National Health and Medical Research Council codes on human and
animal experimentation;
(e) the Australian Government’s Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee
guidelines for research; and
(f) 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 had their candidature confirmed.

Currently enrolled candidates accepting an Award must provide a copy of the
approval from the Human Research 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 ACU will terminate an Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship:
(a) if, in its opinion, the course of study is not being carried out with
competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of the Award;
(b) if, it determines that a student is guilty of serious academic misconduct;
(c) when the candidate ceases to be a full-time candidate and when approval has not been obtained to hold the Award on a part-time basis;

(d) on completion of the course, or the death, incapacity, resignation or withdrawal of the candidate;

(e) the award holder does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of suspension, or does not make arrangements to extend that period of suspension;

(f) if the award holder fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress; and/or

(g) if the award holder accepts another equivalent award, scholarship or salary to undertake their research higher degree providing a greater than 75% of the base ACU Indigenous Postgraduate Scholarship stipend rate.

11.2 If an APA is terminated, it cannot be reactivated unless the termination occurred in error. The Department of Education must be advised of all terminations in the Annual Report.

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.