

Women's Re-Entry Scholarship (WRE) 2013 Rules

1. BACKGROUND

WRE scholarships are awarded to women wishing to update their research credentials through a Higher Degree by Research at QUT and who are able to demonstrate a period of significant interruption to their academic career.

WREs are provided to assist with general living costs.

The following Rules are based on the Department of Industry, Innovation Science, Research and Tertiary Education's (DIISRTE) [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2010](#) and adapted to comply with QUT's [Doctor of Philosophy Regulations](#) and [Higher Degree research candidate policy](#).

2. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Basic Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for a WRE, a student must:

- (a) have completed a Bachelor Degree with First Class (H1) or Upper Second Class (H2A) Honours, or be regarded by QUT as having an equivalent level of attainment in accordance with paragraph 2.2 of these Rules; and
- (b) be undertaking a *Higher Degree by Research* at QUT; and
- (c) be enrolled as a full-time student, unless QUT has approved a part-time WRE for the student under paragraph 2.3 of these Rules; and
- (e) if undertaking:
 - (i) a *Research Masters*, not hold a *Research Doctorate* or a *Research Masters* or an equivalent research qualification; or
 - (ii) if undertaking a *Research Doctorate*, not hold a *Research Doctorate* or an equivalent research qualification; and
- (g) not be receiving an equivalent award, scholarship or salary providing a benefit greater than 75% of the WRE stipend rate to undertake the HDR. Income from sources unrelated to the course of study is not to be taken into account.

2.2 Equivalent Attainment to a Bachelor Degree with First Class or Upper Second Class Honours

If a student does not hold a Bachelor degree with First Class (H1) or Upper Second Class (H2A) Honours, then QUT may determine that the student has demonstrated an equivalent level of academic attainment. In determining an equivalent level of academic attainment, QUT may consider previous study, relevant work experience, research publications, referees' reports and other research experience.

2.3 Approval of a Part-time WRE

- 2.3.1 QUT may approve a part-time *WRE* for a student only if the student is a *domestic student* and the student has exceptional circumstances
- 2.3.2 For the purpose of paragraph 2.3.1, QUT 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.
- 2.3.3 Examples of caring commitments include, but are not limited to:
- Caring responsibilities for a pre-school child; or,
 - Caring responsibilities for school-aged children as a sole parent with limited access to outside support; or,
 - Caring responsibilities for an invalid or disabled spouse, child or parent.
- A Statutory Declaration, Birth Certificate or other proof is necessary to substantiate any of the conditions above.
- 2.3.4 In determining exceptional circumstances when approving a part-time *WRE*, QUT will not determine that a student is in exceptional circumstances unless it is satisfied that the student's personal or family circumstances are such that it would be unreasonable to expect the student to study on a full-time basis.
- 2.3.5 Part-time awards are not available to applicants seeking to undertake paid employment on a full-time or substantial part-time basis, and recipients are subject to the same restrictions on the amount of employment as full time *WRE* recipients.
- 2.3.6 Part-time awardees are expected to progress at half the time of a full time award.
- 2.3.7 A student who has a part-time *WRE* may revert to full-time study at any time with the permission of QUT.

3. APPLICATION, SELECTION AND OFFER PROCESSES AND POLICIES

3.1 Applications

- 3.1.1 QUT conducts a competitive application process for awarding *WREs*.
- 3.1.2 Applications for *WREs* must be submitted in the form approved and by the date determined by QUT.
- 3.1.3 *WRE* applicants are required to supply a statement with their application that demonstrates a significant interruption to their academic career.
- 3.1.4 QUT will include the following statement on the application form, immediately prior to the applicant's signature block: "Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the Criminal Code (Commonwealth)".

3.2 Selection Policy

QUT maintains a *WRE* selection policy which accords with these Rules and the fairness requirements in Subdivision 19-D of Part 2-1 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*. QUT selects students for a *WRE* in accordance with the policy.

3.3 Offer Process

- 3.3.1 QUT will only offer a student a *WRE* as a result of an application lodged as part of a competitive application process; or
- 3.3.2 QUT will offer a *WRE* to a student in writing and advise the student in writing of the assistance to which they are entitled and the conditions of the *WRE*

3.4 Payments to Students

3.4.1 Each year, QUT will pay each student the full value of their *WRE* stipend unless that student has commenced late or suspended their *WRE* or the *WRE* has been terminated. Where a student is not enrolled over the full period of the year, because of a late commencement or periods of *suspension*, QUT will pay at least the proportion of the annual stipend for the period in which study is undertaken for that year.

3.4.2 QUT will make fortnightly payments to students in respect of their annual stipend. Payments must be made directly to students. To avoid doubt, payment into an account in the student's name with an Australian ADI (as defined in the *Corporations Act 2001*) is considered to be a payment directly to the student.

3.5 Value of Scholarships and Indexation Arrangements

3.5.1 The 2013 *WRE* stipend rates are listed in Appendix 1.

3.6 Relocation Allowance

Students may be eligible for a relocation allowance in addition to the annual stipend for the cost of relocating themselves, their spouse and dependants to a new place of residence where this is necessary to enable the student to undertake the *HDR*. QUT must maintain and apply its relocation allowance policy. A claim for relocation allowance is assessed against QUT's relocation allowance policy (Appendix 2).

3.7 Duration of a *WRE*

3.7.1 The duration of a full-time *WRE* is three years for a student undertaking *Research Doctorate* studies, and up to two years for a student undertaking *Research Masters* studies. The duration of a part-time *WRE* is six years for *Research Doctorate* studies and up to four years for *Research Masters* studies.

3.7.2 The duration of a *WRE* will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken:

- (a) towards the degree prior to the commencement of the *WRE*; or
- (b) towards the degree during *suspension* of the *WRE* (unless the study was undertaken overseas as part of a Commonwealth Government financially supported international postgraduate research scholarship or award – see paragraph 2.1(g)); or
- (c) previously while receiving an Australian postgraduate coursework award.

3.7.3 The duration of a *WRE* will be increased by any periods of paid sick or maternity leave approved by QUT.

3.8 Extension of a *WRE*

3.8.1 QUT may also approve an extension to the duration of a *WRE* for a *Research Doctorate* student of up to six months provided the student is making satisfactory progress and the grounds for the extension relate to the study and are beyond the control of the student. QUT will not approve an extension to the duration of a *WRE* for a *Research Masters* student.

An application to extend the period of tenure of the *WRE* should be submitted to using the appropriate QUT form within three months of the end of the *WRE*. Any delays must be highlighted in the Annual Progress Reports. The student's Faculty will fund 50% of any approved *WRE* extension.

3.8.2 If a part-time *WRE* is converted to a full-time *WRE* then the period of time that the student is regarded as having been in receipt of the part-time *WRE* immediately prior to the conversion will be halved for the purpose of determining the duration the student is regarded as having been in receipt of a full-time *WRE* immediately after conversion.

- 3.8.3 If a full-time *WRE* is converted to a part-time *WRE* then the period of time that the student is regarded as having been in receipt of the full-time *WRE* immediately prior to the conversion will be doubled for the purpose of determining the duration the student is regarded as having been in receipt of a part-time *WRE* immediately after conversion.

4. CONDITIONS OF SCHOLARSHIP

4.1 Ongoing Eligibility

- 4.1.1 QUT monitors students' ongoing eligibility through the Annual Progress Reports and degree milestones to ensure that each student continues to meet the eligibility requirements set out in paragraph 2.1 of these Rules.
- 4.1.2 *WRE* recipients are required to notify the Research Students Centre as soon as possible of any change in circumstances which may affect eligibility to continue to receive any Scholarship Entitlements.

4.2 Suspensions of a WRE

- 4.2.1 Students may apply QUT for a suspension of their *WRE*. The approval of a suspension will be at the discretion of QUT. (In respect of a scholarship, a *suspension* means a period of time during which a scholarship holder is not receiving scholarship payments.)
- 4.2.2 Any periods of study undertaken during a suspension will be deducted from the maximum period of tenure of the *WRE*.
- 4.2.3 If prior approval of a suspension is not obtained, the student shall be deemed to be absent without permission and the *WRE* shall terminate.
- 4.2.4 If the student does not resume study at the conclusion of a period of suspension, or does not make arrangements to extend that period of suspension, the award will terminate.

4.3 Transfer to another Higher Education Provider (HEP)

WREs are only for study at QUT and cannot be transferred to any other HEP.

4.4 Conversion of Degrees

- 4.4.1 Students may convert from a *Research Masters* degree to a *Research Doctorate* degree or from a *Research Doctorate* degree to a *Research Masters* degree, and continue to receive their *WRE*.
- 4.4.2 A student who completes a *Research Masters* may continue to receive their *WRE* for a *Research Doctorate* provided there is no interval between the completion of the *Research Masters* and the commencement of the *Research Doctorate*, or that such an interval is covered by suspension of the *WRE*.
- 4.4.3 The maximum duration of a converted *WRE* becomes that for the new research degree minus periods of study undertaken towards the related degree prior to the conversion.

4.5 Leave Entitlements

- 4.5.1 Students are entitled to receive up to 20 working days' paid recreation leave and 10 working days' paid sick leave for each year of the *WRE*. These leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the *WRE* but will be forfeited when the *WRE* is terminated. These leave entitlements can be taken at any time within the term of the award by agreement with the supervisor and do not require RDC approval or notification. Milestone dates will not be adjusted and satisfactory progress must be maintained.
- 4.5.2 Students are entitled to receive additional paid sick leave of up to a total of 12 weeks during the duration of the *WRE* for periods of illness where the student has insufficient sick leave entitlements available under paragraph 4.5.1, provided that a medical certificate has been provided by the student to QUT.

- 4.5.3 Sick leave entitlements (including additional sick leave) may also be used to cover leave for students with family caring responsibilities, subject to the usual practice of QUT.
- 4.5.4 Students who have completed 12 months of their *WRE* are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks paid maternity leave during the duration of the *WRE*. Subject to the usual practice of QUT, paid leave may also be approved if the student has adopted a child.
- 4.5.5 Students who are partners of women giving birth during a *WRE* and who have completed 12 months of their *WRE*, may be entitled to a period of paid parenting leave at the time of the birth or adoption, subject to the usual practice of QUT.
- 4.5.6 Leave of Absence, including any leave taken in consultation with your supervisor that is less than 20 days, will not be grounds for an extension of scholarship. All leave must be managed so that it has no adverse impact on the satisfactory completion of your research milestones. If this will not be the case, then please apply for unpaid leave of absence and suspension of your scholarship using the Leave of Absence form.
- 4.5.7 Students may apply to RDC for leave of absence from their degree and suspension of the *WRE* for periods up to twelve months. Periods of leave greater than 20 days must be approved by the RDC.
- 4.5.8 *WRE* recipients must apply for leave of absence before the leave of absence occurs to ensure scholarship payments are suspended in a timely manner or the correct paid leave entitlements are applied to the duration of the recipient's leave.

4.6 Work

- 4.6.1 Domestic students may undertake work outside the *HDR* subject to the approval of their *HEP*. International students may undertake work consistent with the conditions of their student visa and subject to the approval of QUT prior to undertaking such work.
- 4.6.2 A full time student in receipt of a *WRE* is required to commit to their course of study not less than 30 hours per week, during the normal working week. With the approval of the supervisory panel and Head of School in which the course of study is being undertaken (following the advice of the principal supervisor), the student may engage in a limited amount of part-time employment provided that such employment does not interfere with the course of study. Students, therefore, are allowed to undertake between 8 to 10 hours during the normal working week.
- 4.6.3 The supervisory panel will report on the amount of part-time employment during the normal working week in the Annual Progress Report.
- 4.6.4 There is no limit on how much income an award holder can receive from part-time work which is not related to the research topic.
- 4.6.5 QUT reserves the right to terminate the award of any recipient whose progress, as a result of additional work undertaken, is not satisfactory.
- 4.6.6 QUT will not approve a student undertaking work unless it is satisfied that the work will not interfere with the student's study for their *HDR*.
- 4.6.7 Work commitments cannot be accepted as grounds for an extension of the duration of the *WRE*.

4.7 Termination of a *WRE*

- 4.7.1 QUT must terminate a *WRE*:
 - (a) if the student ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in paragraph 2.1 of these Rules, other than during a period in which the *WRE* has been suspended or during a period of leave in accordance with paragraph 4.2 of these Rules; or
 - (b) when the student ceases to be a full-time student and approval has not been obtained from QUT to hold the *WRE* on a part-time basis; or
 - (c) when the student completes the course of study; or

- (d) if QUT determines that:
- (i) the course of study is not being carried out with competence and diligence or in accordance with the offer of the *WRE*; or
 - (ii) the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress; or
 - (iii) the student has committed serious misconduct, including, but not limited to the provision of false or misleading information in terms of paragraph 4.8.

4.7.2 If a *WRE* is terminated, it cannot be re-activated unless the termination occurred in error.

4.8 Provision of False or Misleading Information

If QUT knows or has reason to believe that a student in receipt of a *WRE* has provided false or misleading information to QUT in relation to the *WRE*, QUT will immediately re-assess the student's entitlement to the *WRE*.

5. MISCELLANEOUS

5.1 Supervision and Facilities

QUT must:

- (a) ensure that adequate facilities and appropriate supervision are available for each student undertaking a *HDR*; and
- (b) establish, make publicly available, and abide by, a code of supervisory practice for students undertaking a *HDR*.

5.2 Overpayment of a scholarship

If, in the opinion of QUT, a student has been overpaid any part of a *WRE* entitlement (either through the failure of the student to comply with these Rules or for any other reason), the student will be required repay the full amount of the overpayment, without deduction within thirty days of being requested to do so by QUT.

5.3 Appeals

Students have the right to appeal against decisions made by QUT in relation to their *WRE*. In the event of a dispute arising, the student should first approach his or her supervisor who will then direct the student through the appropriate channels within QUT. The Research Degrees Committee has the authority to hear appeals from applicants who consider that their application has been incorrectly assessed. Appeals can only be heard against process issues and not against committee decisions or assessor ratings and comments.

5.4 Contact

WREs are administered by QUT's Research Students Centre:

Administrative Officer (Scholarships)

Research Students Centre
Level 4, 88 Musk Avenue
Kelvin Grove QLD 4059

Queensland University of Technology
GPO Box 2434
Brisbane QLD 4001
Australia

Tel: +61 7 3138 4923 or +61 7 3138 2932

Fax: +61 7 3138 1304

Email: research.scholarships@qut.edu.au

www.qut.edu.au/research/scholarships-and-funding

Appendix 1: Value of Awards

WRE stipend rates are based on the Commonwealth Government's Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) rates. They are indexed annually.

Full time WREs are exempt from tax; Part time WREs are taxable.

Year	Full-Time Rate (per annum, tax exempt)	Full time Rate (fortnightly, tax exempt)	Part-Time Rate (per annum, before tax)	Full time Rate (fortnightly, before tax)
2013	\$24,653	\$944.94	\$12,326 [#]	\$472.45
2012	\$23,728	\$909.49	\$12,898	\$494.38
2011	\$22,860	\$876.22	\$12,388	\$474.83

^{*}The 2013 full-time stipend rate represents a 3.9 per cent increase from the 2012 rate and incorporates the improved indexation announced as part of the 2009/2010 budget.

[#]With the introduction of an increased tax-free threshold to \$18,200 for the 2012-13 financial year, the 2013 part-time stipend no longer includes a component to ensure recipients receive half of the full-time stipend rate after tax. The value of the 2013 stipend rate remains at half the value of the 2013 full-time rate, although the amount is lower than the nominal 2012 rate.

Appendix 2: Relocation Allowance

A relocation allowance is available to *domestic* students who must move from another Australian city to Brisbane to take up the award. *The maximum level of reimbursement for the sum of both travel and removal expenses is \$1,520.* Allowable items include:

- One-way economy airfare from another Australian city to Brisbane for the student, spouse and/or dependants. Boarding passes must be provided.
- Where a student elects to travel by car, a per kilometre allowance up to the equivalent (economy) airfare costs.
- Removal expenses of up to \$505 per adult and \$255 per child.

Applicants who relocate to Brisbane prior to being offered a WRE will *not* be eligible to receive the relocation allowance.

Reimbursement claims must be made within two (2) years of termination of the award and within twelve (12) months of submission of the thesis. Original receipts and a [Supplier Maintenance Form](#) must be provided to the Research Students Centre.