

Australian Government
Department of Education and Training

Sharper incentives for engagement: New research block grant arrangements for universities

Consultation Paper

May 2016

Context

On 7 December 2015, the Australian Government announced new Research Block Grant (RBG) funding arrangements for Higher Education Providers (HEPs) as part of the National Innovation and Science Agenda (NISA)¹. These arrangements will drive greater research-industry collaboration by increasing incentives for success in industry and other end-user engagement.

These changes are in direct response to the *Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements*, led by Dr Ian Watt AO².

The new arrangements will replace the existing six RBGs with two streamlined programs.

- The Research Support Program (RSP) will provide around \$879 million in 2017 to Australian HEPs as a flexible funding stream to support the systemic costs of research.
- The Research Training Program (RTP) will provide around \$1.01 billion in 2017 to support the training of the next generation of researchers and innovators.

This includes new funding of \$50 million per annum indexed (\$180.4 million from 2016-17 to 2019-20) to further increase incentives to HEPs for business and end-user engagement through the RSP.

New arrangements will commence on 1 January 2017.

About this paper

This paper forms the basis of consultation with HEPs and other stakeholders on the new RBG program guidelines for 2017. It sets out the new RBG funding arrangements for 2017 arising from the NISA and draws on the outcomes of the *Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements* and the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) *Review of Australia's Research Training System*³. It also details the proposed administrative arrangements for the RSP and RTP and compares them to current (i.e. 2016) arrangements. Draft 2017 program guidelines for the RSP and RTP are at <u>Attachment B</u> and <u>Attachment C</u>.

This paper also highlights possible changes to Categories 2, 3 and 4 of the Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC)⁴ which aim to more clearly identify income resulting from HEPs research engagement activities with government, industry and other organisations, and through Cooperative Research Centres (CRC).

The *Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements* recommended that the Government examine research income counted in HERDC Categories 2, 3 and 4 by mid-2016 to determine which data provide the most appropriate measures of end-user contributions.

¹ <u>http://www.innovation.gov.au/page/new-research-funding-arrangements-HEPs</u>

² https://www.education.gov.au/review-research-policy-and-funding-arrangements

³ http://acola.org.au/index.php/projects/securing-australia-s-future/saf13-rts-review

⁴ <u>https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-research-data-collection</u>

The examination of HERDC Categories 2, 3 and 4 will occur as part of the consultation on new research block grant arrangements although the commencement of any revised arrangements will depend on the nature of any changes adopted and the time required for the implementation of any new arrangements.

Submitting feedback

The department is inviting written submissions in response to this consultation paper by **COB Monday 6 June 2016**.

Consultation questions are provided in this document. You are not limited to simply responding to the consultation questions, however if you can clearly indicate in your response which questions or parts of the consultation paper you are responding to, this will aid collation of information received.

Please note that the department will not treat a submission as confidential unless you specifically request that we treat the whole or part of it (such as any personal or financial information) as confidential.

This consultation paper can be viewed at: <u>www.education.gov.au/rbgconsultationpaper</u>.

Responses to the consultation paper should be sent to <u>RBGrants@education.gov.au</u>.

Feedback received through this consultation process will inform the development of final program guidelines.

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1 RBG Funding Arrangements

This chapter outlines the implementation of funding arrangements for RBGs for 2017. This includes funding drivers, data weightings and transitional arrangements. These reflect actions agreed to by the Government including:

- streamlining the existing six research block grant schemes into the new Research Support Program (RSP) and Research Training Program (RTP);
- simplifying and focussing the funding drivers to apply to the RSP and RTP from 2017 to more clearly signal incentives for end-user engagement;
- the transition arrangements to apply to the funding under the RSP and RTP from 2017 to 2020; and
- an additional \$50 million per annum indexed from 2017 (\$180.4 million over 2016-17 to 2019-20) or to further increase incentives to HEPs for business and enduser engagement.

Background

Australia operates a 'dual support system' for the public funding of research and research training in its higher education sector. The system is comprised of both competitive programs, where funding is distributed through merit-based, peer-determined processes (e.g. Australian Research Council (ARC) grants), and RBGs, which are allocated to HEPs according to performance-based formula and are independent of funding for specific research projects, programs or fellowships.

In 2016, the Australian Government is providing \$1.81 billion to 42 HEPs⁵ as RBGs through six programs administered by the department:

- Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA \$284 million)
- Overseas Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS \$23 million)
- Research Training Scheme (RTS \$690 million)
- Joint Research Excellence (JRE \$363 million)
- Research Infrastructure Block Grants (RIBG \$244 million)
- Sustainable Research Excellence (SRE \$210 million)

Institutions have autonomy in deciding which research projects, research teams, researchers, students, and equipment and infrastructure the RBG funding will support. This also includes decisions by institutions about which businesses, overseas institutions and other organisations they collaborate with in establishing research and research training partnerships. In this way, the Australian system recognises that these sorts of decisions are best made by the institution, its researchers and stakeholder communities.

⁵ <u>https://docs.education.gov.au/node/39121</u>

As announced in the NISA, and responding to the *Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements*, the Australian Government will provide around \$1.89 billion in 2017 through two programs administered by the department:

- The Research Support Program combines JRE, RIBG and SRE
- The Research Training Program combines APA, IPRS and RTS

Additional Government funding for RSP

As announced in the NISA, the Government will provide an additional \$50 million each calendar year indexed from 2017 (\$180.4 million from 2016-17 to 2019-20) through the RSP to further increase incentives to HEPs for business and end-user engagement.

To provide the intended incentive, the additional funding will be allocated based on research engagement income as measured by HERDC Categories 2, 3 and 4. As a result, 47 per cent of RSP funding will be allocated on the basis of HERDC Category 1 income and 53 per cent allocated on the basis of HERDC Category 2, 3 and 4 income. This incentive is designed to influence greater levels of end-user engagement without the Government adopting a more prescriptive approach, such as creating a dedicated sub-program with its own set of rules. However, the Government will monitor the levels of end-user engagement under the new RBG arrangements and may consider more prescriptive arrangements for this additional allocation in the future if the stated policy objectives are not achieved through this measure.

Funding Drivers and Weightings

The funding drivers for RBG allocations from 2017 are described in the NISA and the Review of Research Finding and Policy Arrangements. In summary:

- **research income** and higher degree by research (HDR) **student completions** will drive all RBG funding from 2017; and
- research publication counts have been removed from the funding formulae along with HDR student load and the SRE funding moderators - Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) ratings and transparent costing data.

These changes vastly simplify the allocation of RBGs and improve the transparency of funding outcomes.

There has been some concern raised about the removal of research publication counts from the RBG formulae. However, this data only drives 7.4 per cent of total funding under the current arrangements. Research publications will remain an important indicator of research quality in the ERA process, in the awarding of competitive research grants, and in overseas HEP global ranking systems which are heavily influenced by research performance including publication outputs and citations.

Weightings will continue to be applied to HDR student completions to account for the type of HDR qualification completed (PhD or Masters) and whether students complete the degree in a high or low cost discipline.

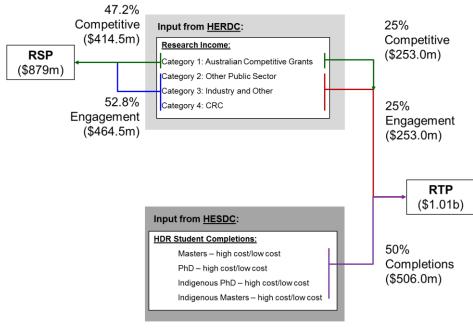
The *Review of Australia's Research Training System* has identified that increasing the weighting for Indigenous HDR completions through the RTS has the potential to better recognise the importance of Indigenous participation in HDR training. "Although Indigenous people comprise 3 per cent of Australia's overall population, they account for less than 1.4% of HDR enrolments and approximately only 0.55% of HDR completions."⁶

The New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) provides a model for weighting Indigenous HDR completions. The TEC's Performance-Based Research Fund doubles the weighting for HDR student completions by Māori and Pacific students. The department proposes to adopt a similar approach for the RTP allocations formula – with the weighting for HDR completions by Indigenous students to be doubled.

All HDR student completion weightings to be applied in the RTP allocation formula are set out below:

	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous
Research Doctorate high-cost	4.7	9.4
Research Doctorate low-cost	2	4
Research Masters high-cost	2.35	4.7
Research Masters low-cost	1	2

The funding drivers and weightings for the 2017 RBG allocations are set out in the diagram below. Data will continue to be averaged over two years consistent with current arrangements.



Note: funding amounts as at Budget 2016-17

⁶ McGagh, J, Marsh, H, Western, M, Thomas, P, Hastings, A, Mihailova, M, Wenham, M (2016) *Review of Australia's Research Training System*

Transitional arrangements

The *Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements* recognised that while HEPs are agile institutions able to respond to the new RBG arrangements, there is a need for transition arrangements over the first four years so that institutions can meet existing commitments and adjust to new incentives. Accordingly, the Government will implement the following transitionary arrangements consistent with those recommended by the review:

- a safety net for RSP funding to apply from 2017 to 2020, so that no HEP receives less than 95 per cent of its funding for the prior year, indexed; and
- progressively increasing the influence of the new RTP funding formula by applying it to 25 per cent of the pool in each of years 2017 to 2020, with the balance being based on the previous year's allocations. From 2021 the allocations will be determined through the application of the new funding formula to the entire pool.

2 Research Support Program

As is currently the case with RIBG, SRE and JRE, the RSP will be a flexible funding stream which allows HEPs to develop the organisational capacity required to undertake world-class research, meet national and institutional research priorities, and plan research projects/ programs for the long term. The approach recognises the diversity of research support needs within and between HEPs, and allows HEPs to develop and consolidate areas of research strength.

The objectives of the RSP are to:

- provide a flexible funding stream to support the systemic costs of research at Australian HEPs, including the indirect costs of Australian competitive research grants;
- support the delivery of world class research; and
- support collaboration with industry and other research end-users.

Issue 1: Allowable expenditure

With the move to establish the RSP in place of RIBG, SRE and JRE, there is a need to determine allowable expenditure under the new program, as allowable expenditure under the current three programs varies.

The conditions of grant for RIBG and SRE limits expenditure to meeting the indirect costs of Australian competitive research grants, including the non-capital aspects of facilities, equipment purchase and salaries of research support staff. JRE is a more flexible funding stream with conditions of grant allowing for program funding to be expended on any activity related to research (excluding JRE - Engineering Cadetships).

This leads to administrative complexities, such as salaries of teaching and research, and research-only academic staff, being excluded under RIBG (and potentially SRE), but being allowed under JRE. It has also led to a lack of transparency around the Government's support for the indirect cost of Australian competitive research grants, with RIBG and SRE generally cited as the Government's contribution to meeting these costs, but HEPs also able to use JRE for this purpose.

To harmonise the arrangements and provide the appropriate level of flexibility, the department proposes that RSP grants can be spent on the direct and indirect costs of research with HEPs to choose the appropriate balance.

To provide transparency and to allow for expenditure of Government support to be more accurately monitored, it is proposed that HEPs be required to separately report RSP expenditure on the indirect costs of Australian competitive research grants in their Financial Statements.

Consistent with current arrangements, it is proposed that RSP funding would not be used to support capital infrastructure costs not directly related to research. Such costs include:

- the design and management of new builds of, or refurbishment of, premises;
- the build or refurbishment costs related to groundworks, foundations, walls, floors, roofing, glazing and cladding of premises;
- standard building functionality such as heating, ventilation and air conditioning, plumbing and electrical and data distribution; and
- the purchasing land or existing property.

They do not include specialised research specific capital investment such as PC labs and specialised research equipment and IT needs.

The department is also proposing excluding the costs associated with supporting research students as these will be supported under the RTP. Such an arrangement would clearly demarcate the two programs and ensure transparency. However, the department recognises that research students are integrated into the fabric of HEPs research operations, and such an approach may not be practical.

The table below sets out the proposed allowable expenditure under the RSP and compares this to current arrangements.

Current Ar	rangements	Proposed Arr	rangements		
Inclusions	Exclusions	Inclusions	Exclusions		
R	RIBG				
Non-capital aspects of facilities such as libraries, laboratories, computing centres, animal houses, herbaria, experimental farms Equipment purchase, installation, maintenance, hire and lease Salaries of research support staff Travel costs to allow participation in overseas consortia	Capital works (i.e. construction of buildings) Rental of accommodation Salaries of teaching and research, and research-only academic staff Salaries of staff supporting research at the institutional level Stipends of postgraduate research students Travel costs directly associated with individual projects with the exception of travel costs to allow participation in overseas consortia	Direct and Indirect costs of research	Capital infrastructure costs not directly related to research Support for HDR students		
S	RE				
Any activity related to the indirect costs of Australian Competitive Grant Research.	Anything other than the indirect costs of Australian Competitive Grant Research				
	Base				
Any activity related to research, including support of soft infrastructure and maintenance of capital items.	No exclusions				

The funding for research support is aimed at providing flexible support for HEPs to achieve research outcomes which are measured, in part, by the relevant performance metrics for the research block grants. Consequently, there is an argument that the department should remove all restrictions on the expenditure of RSP funding and allow expenditure on any direct or indirect cost of research. Accordingly, the department invites feedback on the question of whether restrictions on funding remain necessary as well as the restrictions proposed above.

Consultation question:

1 Does RSP funding require limits on allowable expenditure? If so, would the proposed restrictions allow sufficient flexibility to support HEPs research activities?

Issue 2: Measuring Performance

It is a requirement under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act* (PGPA Act) that the department have procedures in place for collecting and analysing information and data for the purposes of measuring the performance of individual programs and activities.

In order to meet its responsibilities under the PGPA Act, and to provide confidence to the Government and the public that the RSP is meeting its objectives, the department seeks input from stakeholders on measures that could readily demonstrate the value of the RSP to the national research effort.

The department recognises that, as a block grant, the RSP will have a far reaching but diffuse impact on HEPs research activities. It will enable a range of projects, researchers, activities, equipment and systems that underpin the research conducted by HEPs. However, individual research outputs or outcomes may be difficult to attribute solely to the RSP due to other sources of funding, such as competitive research grants or internal HEP funding, which also supports these activities.

Some indirect measures could be used to demonstrate the benefits of the RSP, such as the percentage of research rated as world standard or above in ERA. However, more direct measures, closely connected with the RSP could allow the department to better demonstrate the value of the RSP to Government and the public more broadly. Such measures might include:

- the *number of researchers* and *research support staff* supported directly or indirectly by the RSP
- the type and number of research outputs directly or indirectly supported by the RSP
- the number of research projects supported directly or indirectly by the RSP

The department aims to keep reporting requirements as low as possible for HEPs. The department is seeking advice from HEPs on what information could be provided at a

relatively low cost to demonstrate value for money and performance under the RSP, and how this information could be provided.

Consultation question:

2 What information could HEPs provide to best demonstrate value for money and performance under the RSP?

3 Research Training Program

The RTP will provide funding to support the training of domestic and overseas higher degree (PhD and Masters) by research (HDR) students. It replaces the current APA, IPRS and RTS programs. Combining these programs, which support tuition fee costs, living costs and some allowances, into a single program (RTP) provides an unprecedented opportunity to align support with individual student needs. This will ensure that research graduates have the appropriate skills to gain employment in academia, industry, government and the not-for-profit sector.

The objectives of the RTP are to:

- Provide flexible funding arrangements to support the training of domestic and overseas research students at Australian HEPs;
- Deliver graduates with the skills required to build careers in academia and other sectors of the labour market;
- Support collaboration with industry and other research end-users; and
- Support overseas HDR students studying at an Australian HEP.

Issue 3: A single funding pool

Research training is currently supported through three of the RBG programs:

- **APA** provides stipends to students to support the general living costs of HDR students and allowances to support moving and thesis publication costs
- **IPRS** supports the training costs for overseas HDR students and health cover costs for these students and their dependents
- **RTS** provides full-cost support for the training costs of domestic HDR students

The table below sets out the number of students receiving support under these programs in 2014 (the latest full year data available).

	Type of support	Number of HDR students in 2014 who got support	Proportion of total RBG research training funding in 2016	
	RTS only	27,817	48.6%	
Domestic	RTS+APA	11,764	47.5%	
	Total	39,581	96.1%	
	IPRS only	563	1.0%	
Overseas	IPRS+APA	691	2.8%	
	Total		3.9%	
Grand total		40,835	100%	

This table shows that that the bulk of funding is currently directed towards domestic students, particularly tuition fees support for domestic students (with a relatively small

proportion allocated to support overseas students). In addition, under the current arrangements, very few overseas students receive living cost support.

Under a single program, these barriers to regulating the proportion of funding provided to different student categories (domestic and overseas) for different uses (tuition fees and living costs) would be removed.

A single, flexible program would appear to be the best way to deliver research training support. This is consistent with The *Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements* which concluded that the three schemes should be combined to:

- offer both stipends and tuition fee scholarships to the best applicants in priority areas of research, regardless of nationality
- offer stipends and tuition fee scholarships for longer periods of time, where justified by innovation in course structures or personal circumstances
- introduce innovative structures and arrangements which increase the skills and employability of research graduates, such as business placements and relevant coursework in appropriate research fields.⁷

The *Review of Australia's Research Training System* has also highlighted problems with the current, separate funding program framework including disparities between the length of tuition fee support and living cost support, and limitations the current rules place on developing transferable skills and enabling industry collaboration within HDR training.

The department recognises that under a single funding pool, the proportion of funding used to support domestic and overseas student may shift over time. Currently, less than 5 per cent of overseas HDR students in Australia receive support through the IPRS. The remaining students pay full tuition fees or seek support through other scholarships from the Australian Government, HEPs or from their country of origin. The number of commencing overseas HDR students has more than doubled since 2001 while the number of domestic HDR students has remained relatively unchanged. This suggests that when the current barriers are removed, a greater proportion of RTP funding may be used to support overseas students than the current arrangements allow, and the balance of funding between tuition fee support and living cost support may also shift. This may be advantageous to Australia in the long run, bringing strong research students to Australia and expanding the pool of research students that would provide our research and innovation workforce in the future. However, it is also important to ensure Australian research students retain acceptable access to opportunities in the research training system.

To ensure an appropriate balance is maintained, the department considers that a simple cap of 10 per cent of all RTP funding could be placed on allocations to support international students.

⁷ p24, <u>https://www.education.gov.au/review-research-policy-and-funding-arrangements</u>

Alternatively, rather than attempt to moderate such changes, the department could expand reporting on the number and type of students receiving RTP support, the amount of support students receive and how this funding is expended (i.e. tuition fee support vs stipend support). This would allow monitoring of the program to identify any undesirable consequences and adjust program parameters as required.

Consultation questions:

- 3 Should a cap be imposed on international enrolments or should enrolments be unrestricted and monitored over time?
- 4 Which key dimensions of RTP support (such as the type of students, total amount of support and stipend levels) would reporting need to include to ensure the program is meeting its policy goals and no undesirable consequences are occurring?

Issue 4: Eligibility criteria

There are distinct and variable eligibility criteria for RTS, IPRS and APA support. Only domestic students are eligible to receive support under the RTS and only overseas students are eligible to receive support under the IPRS. Overseas students are only eligible to receive support under the APA scheme if they are also in receipt of an IPRS. As a consequence, most APAs are awarded to domestic students. A range of other eligibility criteria are applied to each program as set out in the table below.

Under the RTP, eligibility criteria could be streamlined to remove those related to nationality, minimum qualifications and prior HDR study. This would ensure that HEPs are still able to prioritise students in competitive selection processes for RTP stipends on the basis of minimum qualifications and prior HDR study (see Issue 7). The department considers that the focus of funding incentives on completions makes a detailed definition of entry standards by the Government unnecessary. It could be sufficient to require a competitive, merit based and transparent selection process. Eligibility for support under the RTP could be simplified to:

- 1. a student must be enrolled in a HDR at an Australian HEP
- 2. an overseas student must meet overseas student visa requirements as specified by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection
- 3. a student receiving a RTP stipend must not be receiving equivalent support providing a benefit greater than 75 per cent of the student's stipend rate and
- 4. a student must not be receiving a scholarship for which course tuition is a component under any other scholarship program to which the Australian Government makes a substantial contribution.

A summary of current and proposed eligibility criteria is set out in the table below.

	Summary of current and proposed eligibility requirements								
Issue	Current RTS	Current APA	Current IPRS	Proposed RTP					
Nationality	Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident (PR) or NZ citizen	Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident or NZ citizen or overseas student (IPRS holder only)	Nationalities other than Australian, Australian PR or NZ citizen.	No restrictions on nationality					
Previous qualification requirements and restrictions	Entitlements are affected by prior uncompleted RTS study within the last 3 years	Minimum of a Bachelor Degree with First Class Honours or equivalent required. If undertaking: i) a Research Masters, not hold a Research Doctorate or a Research Masters or an equivalent research qualification; ii) a Research Doctorate, not hold a Research Doctorate or an equivalent research qualification	If undertaking: i) a Research Masters, not hold a Research Doctorate or a Research Masters or an equivalent research qualification; ii) a Research Doctorate, not hold a Research Doctorate or an equivalent research qualification.	HEPs may take into account previous qualifications in competitive selection processes					
Enrolment status	Enrolment in a HDR	Enrolment in a HDR	Enrolment for the first time in a HDR.	Enrolment in a HDR					
Eligibility – full- time/part- time	Full-time or part-time	Enrolled as a full-time student, unless the <i>HEP</i> has approved a part-time <i>APA</i> for the student.	Full-time	Full-time or part-time (subject to visa requirements below)					
Impact of receiving other scholarships	APA award holders are given priority	 i) Must not previously have held a Commonwealth-funded postgraduate research scholarship unless it was terminated within six months of the scholarship's payments commencing; ii) Must not be receiving an equivalent award, scholarship (excluding an IPRS) or salary providing a benefit greater than 75 per cent of the APA stipend rate to undertake the HDR. Income from sources unrelated to the course of study is not to be taken into account; iii) recipients of a JRE - Engineering Cadetship are excluded. 	 i) Not have held an AusAID scholarship within the two years prior to commencing the IPRS; ii) Not be receiving a scholarship for which course tuition is a component under any other scholarship program to which the Australian Government makes a substantial contribution. 	Students receiving an RTP stipend must not be receiving and equivalent award, scholarship or salary providing a benefit greater than 75 per cent of the student's stipend rate. Students must not be receiving a scholarship for which course tuition is a component under any other scholarship program to which the Australian Government makes a substantial contribution.					
Visa requirements	N/A If the recipient is an overseas student, they must meet appropriate visa requirement as specified by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP)		Meet overseas student visa requirements as specified by DIBP (including health cover requirements)	Student visa requirements retained for overseas RTP students					

Consultation question:

5 Are the proposed RTP eligibility criteria an improvement on current arrangements? Are there likely to be any unintended consequences?

Issue 5: Benefits

Under the RTP, students would be eligible to receive:

- An exemption from payment of student contributions amounts and tuition fees for units undertaken as part of an HDR course of study until 2018 and subject to the finalisation of the Government's proposed directions under the higher education reform agenda; and/or
- living costs support through an annual stipend; and/or
- course-related allowances (e.g. relocation, thesis, Overseas Student Health Cover etc).

This flexible approach recognises that not all students will require all elements of RTP support. For example, some student may receive living cost support through other Government programs or through HEP scholarship schemes.

The value of tuition fee support provided under the RTS and IPRS programs is currently determined by HEPs. In relation to APA, a fixed (indexed) stipend rate is legislated by the Government for full-time students (\$26,288 in 2016) and part-time students (\$13,144 in 2016). Allowances are provided through the APA allocation formula for thesis publication (\$750) and relocation costs (\$375). The cost of Overseas Student Health Cover for overseas students and their spouse / dependants is also covered by the IPRS program.

Under the RTP, it is important that HEPs continue to have discretion regarding the value of tuition fee support provided to take into account varying institutional and course-related costs, and individual student needs.

It is also appropriate for Government to continue to set stipend rates for living costs. However, the department considers that there should be some flexibility introduced into the RTP stipend. A flexible stipend rate could allow to higher living costs experienced by some students to be recognised, or to attract students to fields of research that are institutional and Government priorities.

The department proposes to introduce a RTP stipend range with the minimum amount based on the current APA rate (plus indexation for 2017) and the maximum rate set at \$15,000 above the minimum rate. The maximum rate could also be indexed each year (on the same basis as the minimum rate) to ensure that the differential between the minimum and maximum rates was maintained over time. Assuming a 2% indexation rate per annum, RTP stipend rates for a full-time student are below:

Projected minimum and maximum RTP stipend amounts for full-time students based on 2% indexation							
Year RTP Min RTP Max							
2017	\$26,735	\$41,735					
2018	\$27,269	\$42,569					
2019	\$27,815	\$43,421					
2020	\$28,371	\$44,289					

2021	\$28,938	\$45,175
2022	\$29,517	\$46,078
2023	\$30,107	\$47,000
2024	\$30,710	\$47,940
2025	\$31,324	\$48,899

HEPs would be required to provide a part-time RTP stipend rate set at 50 per cent of the equivalent full-time rate a student would receive within the range set by Government.

HEPs could be responsible for clearly defining the criteria and rationale for offering some classes of students a higher stipend rate than others in their RTP Scholarship Policy (see Issue 8). Similarly, HEPs could be responsible for clearly setting out the criteria and value of allowance entitlements in their RTP Scholarship Policy. The department is seeking views on whether there are undesirable consequences likely to arise from the proposal to set a maximum level of RTP support, such as competition across the sector resulting in most students receiving maximum levels of support and a consequent reduction in numbers of HDR students. One possible approach to limit such a risk would be for the Government to stipulate that no more than 20% of the RTP allocation could be used for higher value support. Another approach would be to limit higher value support to HDR students in fields of research with demonstrable industry engagement such as a formal program of industry placements.

Consultation questions:

- 6 Is the proposed approach to defining RTP benefits a better approach to meeting the goals of the program? Are there likely to be any unintended consequences?
- 7 Will the flexibility to set maximum stipend rates result in competition across the sector and mean that most students will receive the maximum level of RTP support and cause a substantial reduction in HDR student numbers? If this is a likely risk what constraints should be built into the new arrangements?

Issue 6: Length of support

Currently, the lengths of support for students differ across the different programs:

- **RTS** 4 years for research doctorate and 2 years for research masters with no extension possible
- **IPRS** 3 years for research doctorate and 2 years for research masters, plus a possible extension for an unspecified period
- **APA** 3 years for research doctorate, plus a possible extension for 6 months, and 2 years for research masters

As discussed earlier in this paper, the disparity in the length of support between the different programs (particularly for domestic students under the RTS and APA programs) has been highlighted as a problem by both the *Review of Research Policy and Funding*

Arrangements and the Review of Australia's Research Training System. In some cases, a student's ability to complete their degree can be compromised by the withdrawal of living cost support before their course is completed. Combining the three programs into the RTP creates the opportunity to address this problem.

The department proposes that the length of tuition fees support and the living cost support (where provided) be aligned to:

- A minimum 3 years for a full-time Research Doctorate degree, with a HEP able to extend support for two additional periods of up to six-months each based on satisfactory progress. A HEP would also have discretion to provide a further extension of six months only under exceptional circumstances; and
- A minimum 2 years for a full-time Research Masters degree (4 years part-time), with a HEP able to extend support for six months only under exceptional circumstances.

The process through which a student seeks an extension, and the criteria under which the request would be judged, must be clearly set out in a HEPs RTP Scholarship Policy (see Issue 8).

The length of support would start on the course commencement date and conclude when the course requirements have been completed (subject to the period of support arrangements outlined above).

Consultation question:

8 Is the proposed length of RTP support a better approach to meeting the goals of the program? Are there likely to be any unintended consequences?

Issue 7: Application, selection and offer processes

The current APA and IPRS program guidelines require HEPs to conduct competitive processes before awarding a scholarship. This ensures that awardees are selected on merit and that selection processes are conducted in a transparent manner. HEPs must maintain and publish an APA and IPRS selection policy. There is no requirement for HEPs to allocate RTS support through a competitive process.

The department proposes that all living cost stipends awarded to students under the RTP are done on a competitive basis with the nature of these competitive processes determined by HEPs. For example, HEPs may wish to give priority to Indigenous students, low socioeconomic status (SES) students, students undertaking research in a particular discipline or emerging area of research strength, or students undertaking a HDR for the first time.

To comply with the Higher Education Provider Guidelines⁸, HEPs would only able to allocate RTP tuition fee scholarships to overseas students on a competitive basis.

⁸ <u>https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-provider-guidelines</u>

A HEP's application, selection and offer processes for RTP stipend and overseas student tuition fee support would need to be detailed clearly in its RTP Scholarship Policy (see Issue 8). The policy must include a requirement that no scholarship or support would be provided without the process being publicly declared.

HEPs would not have to conduct competitive selection processes to allocate domestic tuition fee support although the means by which this funding is allocated and the consequential value and benefits supported students receive within an institution would need to be detailed clearly in a HEP's RTP Scholarship Policy for the purposes of transparency.

HEPs would have discretion regarding the allocation of allowances, although the basis of awarding allowances would also need to be detailed in a HEPs RTP Scholarship Policy.

Consultation question:

9 Is the proposed approach a better approach to meeting the goals of the program? Are there likely to be any unintended consequences?

Issue 8: RTP Scholarship Policy

Most rules governing student entitlements under the APA, IPRS and RTS programs are specified in program guidelines and conditions of grant. These include rules for full-time and part-time study, suspensions, extensions, paid leave entitlements, work, conversion of degrees, and application, selection and offer processes. While the current rules provide minimum standards and for a degree of standardisation across the sector, they are complex and can prove inflexible for HEPs to administer.

The department proposes that rather than continuing to include detailed rules in program guidelines and conditions of grant, that HEPs could instead be responsible for defining such rules and conditions in an RTP Scholarship Policy wherever possible. This proposal is based on the day-to-day responsibility of HEPs to administer HDR students. HEPs are best placed to understand student needs and institutional priorities. This change will ensure that the focus of funding and accountability is placed on the performance of HEPs in completing HDR graduates rather than on prescriptive program rules.

The department could continue to define the basic requirements in the RTP program guidelines (e.g. eligibility) but HEPs would have more flexibility to define administrative arrangements that work best for their institutional aims, strategies and students.

The RTP program guidelines would be require HEPs to publish a RTP Scholarship Policy on their website which includes arrangements for:

- Eligibility (aligned with RTP program guidelines)
- Benefits (based on RTP program guidelines)
- Length of support (based on RTP program guidelines)
- Application, selection and offer processes (based on RTP program guidelines)
- Transition arrangements for continuing students in 2017

- Supervision standards and access to facilities
- Extensions
- Suspensions
- Paid leave
- Work
- Changes in circumstances (e.g. change from Research Doctorate to Masters and vice versa, change from full-time to part-time and vice versa, changing HEPs, change of research area etc.)
- Termination of support
- Complaints procedures

A HEPs RTP Scholarship Policy would need to accord with the fairness requirements specified in Subdivision 19-35 of Part 2-1 of HESA which states:

(1) A higher education provider that receives assistance under this Chapter in respect of a student, or a class of students, must ensure that the benefits of, and the opportunities created by, the assistance are made equally available to all such students, or students in such class, in respect of whom that assistance is payable.

(2) A higher education provider ...must have open, fair and transparent procedures that, in the provider's reasonable view, are based on merit for making decisions about the selection of students who are to benefit from the grant, allocation or payment.

(3) Subsection (2) does not prevent a higher education provider taking into account, in making such decisions about the selection of students, educational disadvantages that a particular student has experienced.

A HEP would not able to impose rules and conditions over those set out in the RTP program guideline (e.g. HEPs would not be able to apply eligibility criteria beyond those in the RTP program guidelines).

HEPs already have internal policies that largely replicate, and extend upon, the APA, IPRS and RTS program rules. The department anticipates that HEPs would have little difficulty adapting these existing policies into an RTP Scholarship Policy.

The department expects that the rules and conditions set out an RTP Scholarship Policy would initially closely reflect the current rules and conditions set out in the APA, IPRS and RTS program guidelines (and align with those set out in RTP program guidelines).

The department could monitor the RTP Policies periodically to ensure that there are no unintended consequences of this change, such as widely disparate conditions being applied across the sector leading to some students being disadvantaged. If a need to re-regulate specific rules and conditions emerges in the future, the department could seek to reintegrate them into legislated program guidelines.

Consultation question:

10 Would the proposed provide clarity to students regarding RTP processes and entitlements? Are there likely to be any unintended consequences?

Issue 9: Continuing students

The RTP comes into effect on 1 January 2017. This means that students previously supported under these programs, who are continuing their degrees in 2017, will need to be provided with (at least) equivalent support under the RTP to that they would have received under the expiring programs.

For example, a student that would have received support under the RTS and APA programs should be provided with the equivalent level of RTP tuition fee support that they would have received under the RTS and an RTP stipend equivalent to that they would have received under the APA program. In instances where HEPs are able to offer improved benefits to students under the more flexible RTP arrangements, it would be at their discretion subject to such arrangements complying with the RTP program guidelines and a HEP's RTP Scholarship Policy.

The length of RTP support to a continuing student is entitled to receive would be based on the course commencement date (i.e. it must be backdated).

For the purpose of transparency, HEPs could be required to write to all affected continuing students advising them of their 2017 RTP entitlements before 1 January 2017. A 'no disadvantage' clause in the RTP program guidelines would ensure that continuing students receive equivalent support.

Consultation question:

11 Are the proposed transition arrangements sufficient for continuing students? Are there likely to be any unintended consequences?

Issue 10: Measuring Performance

The department currently collects a range of information on HDR students, including the number of students receiving support under the IPRS, APA and RTS programs, through the Higher Education Student Data Collection (HESDC). This data allows the department to monitor a number of aspects of the cohort, such as the nationality of IPRS recipients, APA recipient's fields of education, and the distribution of RTS student load across HEPs. The HESDC provides reasonable demographic information on students supported under Government research training programs.

There will be a significant level of increased flexibility under the proposed arrangements for the RTP. To ensure an appropriate level of accountability and to determine that the Government's policy goals are being achieved, it is important that HEPs provide sufficient information about how funding is used and what outcomes are achieved.

Current HESDC data elements will ensure that the department is able to collect data on the number of RTP scholarships provided to domestic and overseas students. However, this information may not provide the sufficient data for effective program management and evaluation.

Additional data could include the level and type of support provided including RTP stipend amounts. The addition of more comprehensive information on completion and attrition rates, information by Field of Research (as opposed to Field of Education), and information on students with industry placements (or otherwise engaged with industry or other endusers) could also provide a better understanding of the research training system. Such information would allow the policy settings of the RTP to be better monitored and provide an improved set of benchmarking statistics for the sector.

To this end, the department proposes to collect a number of new data items through the HESDC including:

- More comprehensive HDR completion rate data and/or timeframes for completion
- The level and type of support received by HDR students including stipend amounts
- Field of Research (FoR) reporting for HDR students
- Industry engagement data such as numbers of students undertaking industry placements.

The department also proposes to require the reporting of a CHESSN for all students awarded RTP support. This would allow for improved tracking of HDR students and enhanced analysis of completion and attrition rates.

The introduction of new elements would happen no earlier than for the reporting of 2017 data in 2018.

Consultation question:

12 Would the proposed arrangements help the monitoring and benchmarking of student outcomes? Should the department consider collecting any other types of HDR student data such as level of support provided and a stipend amounts for individual students?

4 Measuring Engagement

The *Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements* recommended that a review of RBG engagement data be undertaken to examine research income counted in Categories 2, 3 and 4 of the HERDC to determine which data provides the most appropriate measures of end-user contributions.

The Review identified that while the current income Categories 2, 3, and 4 (set out below) seek to measure engagement, the categories include some income that may not be an appropriate or reliable measure of research engagement.

Category	Sub-category
Category 2: Other public sector research	Australian Government (non-Category 1)
income	State or territory government
	Government business enterprises
	Cooperative Research Centres (CRC)
Category 3: Industry and other research income	Australian contracts
	Australian grants
	Donations, bequests and foundations
	HDR fees for domestic students
	International: competitive, peer-reviewed research grant
	income
	International: other income
	International: HDR fees for overseas students
Category 4: CRC research income	Research income derived from Australian Government grants to
	CRC
	Research income derived from non-university members of CRC
	Research income derived from external parties contributing to
	CRC

This chapter seeks feedback on a number of options for restructuring HERDC Categories 2, 3, and 4 to improve the measures of engagement. The proposed changes fall into three categories: removing data elements, changing sub-categories, and aligning the reporting period for CRC income. Research income reported against Categories 2, 3, and 4 is at <u>Attachment A</u>.

Issue 11: Removing HDR fees

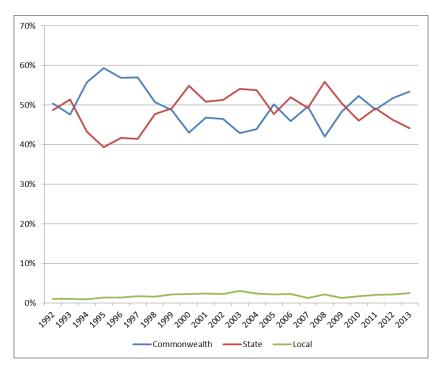
Since the 2011 reporting year, the HERDC has allowed the reporting of both domestic and overseas fees from HDR students as research income within Category 3. Income from HDR fees are classified in the 'Australian HDR fees' and 'Overseas C' sub-categories respectively (both referred to as HDR fees hereafter).

The department proposes to remove HDR fees for both domestic and overseas students from the HERDC income collection. This is because the HDR fees do not appear to provide a good measure of engagement. While it could be argued that HDR fees provide an indication of a student's preference to engage (enrol) in one HEP over another due to its research performance (perhaps best indicated through university ranking systems), in reality students can make such decisions for a range of other reasons, such as cost and location. When compared to the other sub-categories (e.g. grants and contracts) HDR fees represent a very weak indicator of engagement.

Issue 12: Changes to sub-categories - Category 2

Category 2 includes all research income received from Australian governments that is not eligible to be reported as Category 1 income. It is currently reported in three sub-categories that align with the tiers of Australian government: Commonwealth, State and Local.

Category 2 has recorded income from all three tiers of Australian government, Commonwealth, State and Local, since the beginning of the HERDC collection. In that time Local government has averaged less than 2 per cent of **Category 2** income with Commonwealth and State governments comprising slightly less than 50 per cent on average over the period of the collection.



The consistently low level of Local Government income over time does not provide any useful analytical information to justify the need to collect it separately. It is also unlikely that Local Government income will increase over time. The department therefore proposes to incorporate Local Government income into the State sub-category.

The sub-categories also include research income aimed at achieving a range of government objectives including:

- research commissioned for the needs of government, such as to inform policy development;
- distributions from administered research programs for strategic research investments; and
- funding for general research purposes such as general or untied income from government grants, for example National Institutes Grants.

To better align the sub-categories with the objective of Government funding, the department proposes to separate government commissioned research services (own purpose research) from research supported by government where government is not the end-user (other research).

The table below sets out the proposed changes to the **Category 2** sub-categories:

Current sub categories	Proposed sub-categories
Commonwealth	Commonwealth – own purpose
State	State Local – own purpose
Local	Commonwealth – Other
	State/Local – Other

Issue 13: Changes to sub-categories - Category 3

Category 3 has been collected since the commencement of the HERDC. The sub-categories have changed over time in recognition of the changing nature of interactions with industry and the growth of overseas income.

The collection of Australian income by type of funding (i.e. contracts, grants and bequests) does not allow engagement with different types of end-users to be clearly differentiated. Consequently, this does not allow levels of engagement with different end-user groups to be measured.

The department proposes to amend the sub-categories to capture:

- industry income from Australian and international sources (grants and contracts)
- non-profit entities income from Australian and international sources (grants and contracts)
- philanthropy income from Australian and international sources (philanthropic donations from industry would be included in these categories).

The table below sets out the proposed changes to the **Category 3** sub-categories:

Current sub-categories	Proposed sub-categories
Australian – contracts	Australian – Industry
Australian – grants	Australian – non-Profit
Australian – donations/bequests	Australian – Philanthropy
Australian – HDR fees	International – Industry
Overseas – A (competitive)	International – non-Profit
Overseas – B (Other)	International – Philanthropy
Overseas – C (HDR fees)	

Issue 14: Changes to sub-categories - Category 4

Category 4 income has been collected since the beginning of the HERDC and, from the 2000 reporting year, has been sub-categorised into: Commonwealth grant, non-HEP participants and third party sources (non-CRC participants).

The current sub-categories are based around the relationship of funding sources to a CRC rather than identifying the type of end-user organisation funding the research. For example, industry income to a CRC can be reported as either non-HEP participant income or third party income depending on whether the organisation is a formal participant in the CRC or not. This method does not allow the income sourced from industry to be clearly identified; a key requirement for understanding HEP engagement with this part of the economy.

Reporting income from an industry organisation under an 'Industry' sub-category would provide a clearer engagement metric. An 'Other' category would capture income from other non-HEP sources. This is also an effective measure of engagement. The 'Commonwealth grant' category would be retained.

The table below sets out the proposed changes to the **Category 4** sub-categories:

Current sub-categories	Proposed sub-categories
Commonwealth grant	Commonwealth grant
Non-HEP participant	Industry
Third party	Other

Issue 15: Category 4 – Reporting income on a calendar year basis

Category 4 income has been reported on a financial year basis since the HERDC commenced. This was done as a result of CRC accounts being prepared on a financial year basis.

The department proposes CRC income be reported on a calendar basis to align with the remainder of the HERDC income collection.

The reporting of CRC income by financial year is historical and complicates the HERDC arrangements and modern accounting systems allow the reporting of CRC income on a calendar year. To manage the transition, HEPs would be able to 'double count' the six month period that overlaps the relevant financial / calendar years.

Consultation question:

13 Would the proposed changes to Categories 2, 3 and 4 result in more appropriate and reliable measures of research engagement? Should the department consider collecting any other types of engagement data?

Attachment A – Engagement sub-categories time series data, 2005-2014

Data Sub Category	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
CAT2 Commonwealth Other	180,818,179	226,178,044	318,123,448	320,509,884	369,924,920	440,605,996	413,641,877	446,753,839	451,619,727	480,025,868
CAT2 Local	7,798,439	10,911,561	8,086,001	16,293,946	9,446,723	14,779,298	17,530,912	18,172,117	21,292,044	13,982,203
CAT2 State	172,186,784	256,189,644	315,887,783	425,426,107	384,881,058	388,239,723	417,275,781	399,947,995	373,349,227	363,318,358
CAT3 Australian Contracts	172,951,056	198,970,168	222,631,197	270,969,370	215,336,408	205,453,412	219,072,318	231,082,676	239,020,808	245,501,196
CAT3 Australian Grants	92,399,450	100,116,626	99,412,163	121,136,969	117,265,078	145,167,808	132,076,425	138,713,139	150,769,497	125,747,954
CAT3 Domestic HDR Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,740,160	2,606,766	3,073,281	2,641,507
CAT3 Donations	84,051,806	141,790,665	169,219,503	190,938,855	141,742,770	168,361,105	179,140,223	131,046,913	180,837,145	207,260,025
CAT3 International A (competitive)	-	-	66,951,375	71,803,709	73,837,039	63,631,987	72,479,153	79,227,859	92,566,737	97,828,695
CAT3 International B (other)	-	-	113,849,194	117,683,192	118,171,666	213,975,520	98,260,877	111,289,478	115,244,673	140,640,728
CAT3 International C (HDR fees)	-	-	-	-	-	-	126,958,136	135,655,754	143,394,518	161,501,394
CAT3 International Total	142,777,806	185,669,436	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CAT4 Commonwealth	86,865,335	86,633,071	84,268,839	84,236,376	79,287,996	77,560,539	66,627,603	75,149,166	61,544,711	65,058,761
CAT4 Non University Participants	27,016,899	25,306,209	24,460,765	24,600,021	27,289,096	26,350,340	26,714,823	30,656,793	28,230,484	28,955,574
CAT4 Third Party	15,757,760	18,918,167	17,408,140	15,110,713	16,084,758	15,314,192	14,603,577	11,014,780	14,622,373	13,925,804
Total	982,623,514	1,250,683,589	1,440,298,408	1,658,709,141	1,553,267,513	1,759,439,921	1,788,121,865	1,811,317,275	1,875,565,226	1,946,388,066

Source: https://www.education.gov.au/data-used-research-block-grant-rbg-funding-formulae

Notes:

- In 2007 the previous Category 3 International Total category was split into International A (competitive) and International B (other)
- In 2011 the additional sub-categories Domestic HDR fees and International C (HDR fees) were added to Category 3

Attachment B – Draft Other Grants Guidelines (Research) 2017

Other Grants Guidelines (Research) 2017

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Higher Education Support Act 2003

[Subject to Australian Government legal advice]

CHAPTER i INTRODUCTION

i.i PURPOSE

The purpose of these *Guidelines* is to provide for Other Grants under Part 2-3 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (the Act)*.

i.v INTERPRETATION

i.v.i Unless the contrary intention appears, the terms used within the *Other Grants Guidelines (Research)* 2017 have the same meaning as in *the Act*.

i.v.ii The following terms are defined specifically for these *Guidelines*:

the Act	means the Higher Education Support Act 2003
the department	means the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training
Funding Pool A	is the total amount of funding available to <i>the</i> <i>department</i> for a given <i>Grant Year</i> for the <i>RSP</i> minus <i>Funding Pool B</i>
Funding Pool B	is \$50,000,000 for the 2017 <i>Grant Year</i> , indexed in later years in accordance with paragraph 1.5.1
Grant Year	means the year in respect of which the grant is made, and of which <i>the department</i> has notified the relevant <i>HEP</i>
Guidelines	means these Other Grant Guidelines (Research) 2017
HEP	means a higher education provider as specified in section 16-15 of <i>the Act</i> (Table A Providers) or section 16-20 of <i>the Act</i> (Table B Providers)
HERDC	means the Higher Education Research Data Collection maintained by <i>the department</i>
research	means Research and Development as defined in the Frascati Manual 2015 maintained by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RSP	means the Research Support Program
the Minister	means the Commonwealth Minister for Education and Training
Category 1	is Australian competitive grants <i>research</i> income in <i>HERDC</i>
Category 2	is other public sector <i>research</i> income in <i>HERDC</i>
Category 3	is industry and other <i>research</i> income in <i>HERDC</i>
Category 4	is Cooperative Research Centre <i>research</i> income in <i>HERDC</i>

i.v.iii Unless stated otherwise, references to paragraphs refer to paragraphs in these *Guidelines*.

i.x OTHER GRANT FUNDING APPROPRIATION AND PAYMENTS

i.x.i The funding for the other grants (research) grants are appropriated and paid on a calendar year basis.

CHAPTER 1 GRANTS TO SUPPORT RESEARCH BY, AND THE RESEARCH CAPABILITY OF, HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to specify:

- (1) In accordance with section 41-15(1) of *the Act* for the purpose described at Item 7 of the table in section 41-10 of *the Act*, the Research Support Program (*RSP*); and
- (2) Under section 41-15(2) of *the Act*, some other matters relevant to the grants to support *research* by *HEPs*, and the *research* capability of *HEPs*, listed in paragraph 1.1(1) above.

RESEARCH SUPPORT PROGRAM

1.2 Description

The *RSP* provides block grants, on a calendar year basis, to eligible *HEPs* to support the costs of *research* of the Australian higher education system.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the *RSP* are to:

- (1) provide a flexible funding stream to support the systemic costs of *research* at Australian *HEPs*, including the indirect costs of Australian competitive *research* grant,
- (2) support the delivery of world class *research*; and
- (3) support collaboration with industry and other *research* end-users.

1.5 Grant Amounts

1.5.1 Determination of Grants and Indexation

The *RSP* grant amounts will be determined in writing by *the Minister*, or his or her delegate, under section 41-30(a) of *the Act*.

Funding Pool A and *Funding Pool B* amounts for the *RSP* are indexed in accordance with Part 5-6 of *the Act*.

1.5.5 How Grant Amounts are Determined

The RSP grant amount allocated to a HEP for the Grant Year comprises the sum of:

- (1) the *RSP* Basic Grant Amount specified in paragraph 1.5.10; and
- (2) any adjustments made through the application of the transitional safety net specified in paragraph 1.5.15 (if applicable).

1.5.10 Basic Grant Amounts

The formula for calculating each HEP's Basic Grant Amount for the Grant Year is:

$$BGA_{i,y} = (0.50 * A_y * COMPETITIVE_i) + (0.50 * A_y * ENGAGEMENT_i) + (B_y * ENGAGEMENT_i)$$

where:

 $BGA_{i,y}$ = Basic Grant Amount from the RSP for ith HEP in year y

 $A_y = RSP Funding Pool A$ in year y

 $B_y = RSP Funding Pool B in year y$

$$COMPETITIVE_i =$$
Share of *Category 1* income for ith provider calculated according to the following formula:

$$COMPETITIVE_{i} = \frac{Category1_{i,y1} + Category1_{i,y2}}{\sum_{j=1}^{n} (Category1_{j,y1} + Category1_{j,y2})}$$

 $ENGAGEMENT_i$ = Share of Category 2, Category 3 and Category 4 income for ith provider calculated according to the following formula:

$$ENGAGEMENT_{i} = \frac{Category 2, 3, 4_{i,y1} + Category 2, 3, 4_{i,y2}}{\sum_{j=1}^{n} \left(Category 2, 3, 4_{j,y1} + Category 2, 3, 4_{j,y2}\right)}$$

- y = Year for which the grant is given
- y1, y2 = the most recent (y1) and second most recent (y2) years for which data is available
 - i, j = 1...n, where n is the total number of *HEPs*

1.5.15 Transitional Safety Net

For the *Grant Years* 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020, a transitional safety net is applied to ensure that no *HEP's RSP* grant amount for the *Grant Year* will fall below 95 per cent of the equivalent *RSP* grant amount for the previous *Grant Year*.

The transitional safety net is applied using four steps:

- (1) Each *HEP's RSP* grant amount for the previous *Grant Year* is indexed to current prices. The indexation component is determined by dividing the *RSP Funding Pool* for the *Grant Year* by the *RSP Funding Pool* for the previous *Grant Year*.
 - a) For the 2017 *Grant Year* only, each *HEP's RSP* grant amount for the previous *Grant Year* is equal to the total of grant amounts received under the former Joint Research Engagement, Research Infrastructure Block Grants and Sustainable Research Excellence programs.

- (2) For each *HEP* whose Basic Grant Amount calculated in paragraph 1.5.10 is greater than the indexed amount calculated in paragraph 1.5.15(1), the difference between the two amounts is placed in the safety net pool.
- (3) For each *HEP* whose Basic Grant Amount calculated in paragraph 1.5.10 is less than 95 per cent of the indexed amount calculated in paragraph 1.5.15(1), funds are taken from the safety net pool created in paragraph 1.5.15(2) to top up the *HEP*'s *RSP* grant amount to the equivalent 95 per cent.
- (4) Any funds remaining in the safety net pool are then returned to *HEPs* that contributed to the safety net pool in paragraph 1.5.15(2), based on their percentage contribution to the safety net pool.

1.10 Conditions that Apply to *RSP* Grants

1.10.1 Reporting

HEP's are required to report *RSP* related data and other information as specified by *the department*. *The department* will advise a *HEP* of its reporting requirements in relation to a *Grant Year*.

1.10.5 Expenditure of *RSP* Grant Amounts

- (1) A *HEP* has discretion in the way it spends its *RSP* grant amount subject to the requirements set out in these *Guidelines*. A HEP's *RSP* grant amount must only be used to fund activities related to the conduct of *research*. It can be used for the indirect and direct costs of *research*.
- (2) *RSP* grant amounts cannot be used on:
 - a) the design and management of new builds of, or refurbishment of, premises
 - b) the build or refurbishment costs related to groundworks, foundations, walls, floors, roofing, glazing and cladding of premises,
 - c) standard building functionality such as heating, ventilation and air conditioning, plumbing and electrical and data distribution, and
 - d) the purchasing land or existing property.

They do not include specialised *research* specific capital investment such as PC labs and specialised *research* equipment and IT needs.

(3) *RSP* grant amounts may be paid to other *HEPs* and third parties to support the *HEP* activities consistent with paragraph 1.10 of these *Guidelines*.

Attachment C – Draft Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2017

Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2017

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Higher Education Support Act 2003

[Subject to Australian Government legal advice]

CHAPTER i INTRODUCTION

i.i PURPOSE

The purpose of these *Guidelines* is to provide for Commonwealth Scholarships under Part 2-4 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (the Act)*.

i.v INTERPRETATION

i.v.i Unless the contrary intention appears, the terms used within the *Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2017* have the same meaning as in *the Act.*

i.v.ii The following terms are defined specifically for these <i>Guidelines</i> :		
the Act	means the Higher Education Support Act 2003	
AQF	means the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013	
ASCED	means the Australian Standard Classification of Education - 1272.0 - 2001 specified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics	
Australian ADI	has the same meaning as defined in the <i>Corporations</i> Act 2001	
Continuing Student	means a student whose period of support under the Research Training Scheme, International Postgraduate Research Scholarships or Australian Postgraduate Awards would terminate on or after 1 January 2017	
course of study	means an accredited HDR course leading to a Research Doctorate or a Research Masters	
the department	means the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training	
domestic student	has the same meaning as defined in the Act	
FOE	means a Field of Education code specified in the <i>ASCED</i> .	
Full-time student load	in respect of a <i>course of study</i> , is at least 75 per cent of an equivalent <i>full-time student load</i> (EFTSL) in the period for which <i>RTP Scholarship</i> support is received	
Funding Pool	is the total amount of funding available to <i>the department</i> for a given <i>Grant Year</i> for the RTP	
Grant Year	means the year in respect of which the grant is made, and of which <i>the department</i> has notified the relevant <i>HEP</i>	
Guidelines	means these Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2017	
HDR	means a higher degree by <i>research</i> which is a <i>Research Doctorate</i> or <i>Research Masters</i> course for which at least	

	two-thirds of the student load for the course is required as <i>research</i> work
HEP	means a higher education provider as specified in section 16-15 of <i>the Act</i> (Table A Providers) or section 16-20 of <i>the Act</i> (Table B Providers)
HERDC	means the Higher Education Research Data Collection maintained by <i>the department</i>
HESDC	means the Higher Education Student Data Collection maintained by <i>the department</i>
Indigenous student	means a <i>HDR</i> student who identifies herself or himself as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent and is reported as such in the <i>HESDC</i>
non-Indigenous student	means a HDR student who is not an Indigenous student
overseas student	has the same meaning as defined in the Act
research	means Research and Development as defined in the Frascati Manual 2015 maintained by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
Research Doctorate	has the meaning as described in the AQF
Research Masters	has the meaning as described in the AQF
RTP	means the Research Training Program
RTP Scholarship	is a form of support awarded to a student in terms of support items listed in paragraph 1.15.5
RTP Allowance	is a type of <i>RTP Scholarship</i> to assist with ancillary costs incurred by a <i>HDR</i> student in undertaking a <i>HDR</i>
RTP Fees Offset	is a type of <i>RTP Scholarship</i> to assist with course fees that would otherwise be payable by a <i>HDR</i> student
RTP Scholarship Policy	is a policy that specifies a <i>HEP</i> 's administrative rules that apply to <i>RTP Scholarships</i> in relation to items listed in paragraph 1.20
RTP Stipend	is a type of <i>RTP Scholarship</i> to assist students with general living costs
suspension	means a period of time during which a scholarship holder is not receiving <i>RTP Scholarship</i> support
the Minister	means the Commonwealth Minister for Education and Training
Category 1	is Australian competitive grants <i>research</i> income in <i>HERDC</i>
Category 2	is other public sector <i>research</i> income in <i>HERDC</i>
Category 3	is industry and other <i>research</i> income in <i>HERDC</i>
Category 4	is Cooperative Research Centre <i>research</i> income in <i>HERDC</i>

i.v.iii Unless stated otherwise, references to paragraphs refer to paragraphs in these *Guidelines*.

i.x COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING APPROPRIATION AND PAYMENTS

i.x.i The funding for the other grants (research) grants are appropriated and paid on a calendar year basis.

CHAPTER 1 GRANTS TO SUPPORT THE TRAINING OF RESEARCH STUDENTS

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to specify:

- (1) In accordance with section 41-15(1) of *the Act* for the purpose described at Item 8 of the table in section 41-10 of *the Act*, the Research Training Program (*RTP*); and
- (2) Under section 41-15(2) of *the Act*, some other matters relevant to the grants to support the training of *research* students, listed in paragraph 1.1.1(1) above.

RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM

1.2 Description

The *RTP* provides block grants, on a calendar year basis, to eligible *HEPs* to support the *research* training of *domestic students* and *overseas students* undertaking *HDRs*.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the *RTP* are:

- (1) Provide flexible funding arrangements to support the training of domestic and overseas *HDR* students at Australian *HEPs*;
- (2) Deliver graduates with the skills required to build careers in academia and other sectors of the labour market;
- (3) Support collaboration with industry and other *research* end-users; and
- (4) Support overseas *HDR* students studying at an Australian *HEP*.

1.5 *RTP* Grant Amounts

1.5.1 Determination of Grants and Indexation

The *RTP* grant amounts will be determined in writing by *the Minister*, or his or her delegate, under section 41-30(a) of *the Act*.

RTP Funding Pool amounts and *RTP Stipends* are indexed in accordance with Part 5-6 of *the Act*.

1.5.5 Weightings applying to *HDR* student completions

HDR student completions reported in the *HESDC* are to be weighted according to each *Indigenous student* and *non-Indigenous student*'s status, the level of the *HDR*, and the cost type of the *HDR* as specified in the following table:

	non-Indigenous student	Indigenous student
High-Cost Research Doctorate	4.7	9.4
High-Cost Research Masters	2.35	4.7
Low-Cost Research Doctorate	2.0	4.0
Low-Cost Research Masters	1.0	2.0

High-cost and low-cost completions are determined in accordance with high-cost and low-cost fields of study identified in paragraph 1.30.

1.5.10 Basic Grant Amount

The formula for calculating each HEP's Basic Grant Amount for the Grant Year is:

$$BGA_{i,y} = (0.5 * B_y * COMPLETIONS_i) + (0.25 * B_y * COMPETITIVE_i) + (0.25 * B_y * ENGAGEMENT_i)$$

where:

 $BGA_{i,y} = Basic Grant Amount from the$ *RTP*for ith*HEP*in year y $<math display="block">B_{y} = RTP Funding Pool in year y$ $COMPLETIONS_{i} = Share of weighted student completions for the ith$ *HEP*calculatedaccording to the following formula: $<math display="block">COMPLETIONS_{i} = \frac{WSC_{i,y1} + WSC_{i,y2}}{\sum_{j=1}^{n} (WSC_{j,y1} + WSC_{j,y2})}$ WSC = Weighted student completions specified in paragraph 1.5.5 $COMPETITIVE_{i} = Share of Category 1 income for ith provider calculated according$ to the following formula: $<math display="block">COMPETITIVE_{i} = \frac{Category1_{i,y1} + Category1_{i,y2}}{\sum_{j=1}^{n} (Category1_{j,y1} + Category1_{j,y2})}$ $ENGAGEMENT_{i} = Share of Category 2, Category 3 and Category 1_{j,y2})$ V = Year for which the grant is givenyl, y2 = the most recent (y1) and second most recent (y2) years for whichadvantage of the total number of*HEPs*

1.5.15 Grant amounts for 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 Grant Years

For the 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 *Grant Years*, the formula for calculating each *HEP*'s *RTP* grant amount is:

$$RTP_{i,y} = (0.75 * B_y * RTPshare_i) + (0.25 * BGA_{i,y})$$

where:

 $RTPshare_i = the share of RTP grant amount^a for ith provider in the year prior$ to the*Grant Year*calculated according to the following formula:

$$RTPshare_{i,y} = \frac{RTP_{i,y-1}}{\sum_{j=1}^{n} (RTP_{j,y-1})}$$

y-1 = Year prior to the *Grant Year*^a

$$B_{y} = RTP Funding Pool in year y$$

 $BGA_{i,y}$ = Basic Grant Amount calculated in paragraph 1.5.10

^a For the 2017 *Grant Year* only, each *HEP's RTP* grant amount for the previous *Grant Year* is equal to the total of grant amounts received under the former Australian Postgraduate Awards, International Postgraduate Research Scholarships and Research Training Scheme programs.

1.5.20 Grant amounts for 2021 and future Grant Years

For the 2021 and future *Grant Years*, the *RTP* grant amount is equal to the Basic Grant Amount calculated in paragraph 1.5.10.

1.10 Student Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for an *RTP Scholarship* a student must be a *domestic student* or an *overseas student* enrolled in an accredited *HDR* course at an Australian *HEP*.

1.15 Conditions that Apply to *RTP* Grant Amounts

1.15.1 Reporting

HEP's are required to report *RTP* related data as specified by *the department*. *The department* will advise a *HEP* of its reporting requirements in relation to a *Grant Year*.

1.15.5 Expenditure of *RTP* Grant Amounts

A *HEP* must only spend its *RTP* grant amounts on costs incurred in providing the following types of support:

(1) *RTP Fees Offset*;

These costs include but are not limited to:

- a) *HDR* supervisor costs such as salary and on-costs;
- b) *HDR research* projects costs such as lab equipment, field trips, access to external equipment and facilities;
- c) *HDR* industry placements and commercialisation skills training costs;

- d) travel, accommodation and conference costs related to a *HDR*;
- e) *HDR* course development.
- (2) *RTP Stipend*;
 - a) Payments to students as specified in paragraph 1.15.20
- (3) *RTP Allowances* to assist students with ancillary costs of a *HDR* including but not limited to:
 - a) For *overseas students*, a standard Overseas Student Health Cover policy approved by the Commonwealth Department of Health and which covers the student and their spouse and dependants (if any);
 - b) relocation costs to undertake a *HDR*;
 - c) *HDR* thesis printing and academic publication costs.

1.15.10 Period of Support

If a *HEP* awards a student a *RTP Scholarship* in relation to a form of support specified in paragraphs 1.15.5(1) and 1.15.5(2), the following periods of support apply for the *course of study*:

- (1) Three years *full-time student load* if undertaking an eligible *Research Doctorate*; or
- (2) Two years *full-time student load* if undertaking a *Research Masters*.

The period of support is calculated from the *course of study* commencement date.

1.15.15 Extensions of Period of Support

A *HEP* has discretion to approve an extension of any type of support provided by a *RTP Scholarship* beyond the minimum periods of support:

- (1) For a *Research Doctorate*, two additional extensions up to six months *full-time student load* each, subject to satisfactory progress, and a further period of six months *full-time student load* only under exceptional circumstances
- (2) For a *Research Masters*, and a further period of six months *full-time student load* only under exceptional circumstances

A *HEP* must identify in its *RTP Scholarship Policy* the circumstances in which a student would meet the requirements for satisfactory progress and exceptional circumstances in relation to paragraphs 1.15.15(1) and 1.15.15(2).

1.15.20 *RTP Stipend* Maximum and Minimum Value

- (1) *RTP Stipend* values are payable at the applicable rate from 1 January to 31 December for the relevant *RTP Grant Year*.
- (2) For the 2017 *Grant Year*, the minimum full-time *RTP Stipend* rate is \$xx,xxx and the maximum full-time *RTP Stipend* rate is \$xx,xxx.

- (3) The minimum and maximum full-time *RTP Stipend* rates for any particular, subsequent year are the same as that for the preceding year, indexed in accordance with the method set out in Part 5-6 of *the Act*.
- (4) *The department* will advise *HEPs* in writing of the value of the minimum full-time and maximum full-time *RTP Stipend* rates for a year by 1 October of the preceding year.

1.15.25 Additional Conditions for *RTP Stipends*

If a *RTP Stipend* is provided as part of a *RTP Scholarship* specified in paragraph 1.15.5(2), the following additional conditions apply:

- (1) A *HEP* must offer each student selected to receive an *RTP Stipend* a stipend rate at least equal to the minimum full-time *RTP Stipend* rate and no more than the maximum full-time *RTP Stipend* rate as advised by *the department* according to paragraph 1.15.20(4).
- (2) If a student selected to receive a *RTP Stipend* is approved by a *HEP* to undertake a *HDR* on a part-time basis, the student's part-time *RTP Stipend* rate will be 50 per cent of the student's full-time *RTP Stipend* rate.
- (3) Each year, a *HEP* must pay each student their full-time or part-time *RTP Stipend* rate in proportion to the period of their *RTP Scholarship*.
- (4) A *HEP* must make fortnightly payments to students in respect of their *RTP Stipend*. Payments must be made directly to students. To avoid doubt, payment into an account in the student's name with an *Australian ADI* is considered to be a payment directly to the student.
- (5) A *HEP* must maintain paid leave provisions in its *RTP Scholarship Policy* for students receiving a *RTP Stipend* and must grant paid leave to *RTP Stipend* holders in accordance with this policy. The paid leave provisions must provide for recreation leave (up to 20 days for full-time students, pro rata for part-time students) and sick leave (up to 10 days for full-time students, pro rata for part-time students). Provisions must be made for carers leave, compassionate leave, maternity leave and parental leave in accordance with the usual practice of a *HEP* and must also be detailed in a HEP's *RTP Scholarship Policy*.
- (6) A student receiving a *RTP Stipend* must not be receiving an equivalent award, scholarship or salary greater than 75 per cent of a student's *RTP Stipend* rate. Income unrelated to the student's *course of study* and income received for purposes other than to support general living costs is not to be taken into account.
- (7) *RTP Stipends* must only be awarded as a result of a competitive selection process. The nature of a competitive process is to be determined by a HEP although it must accord with these *Guidelines* and the fairness requirements in Subdivision 19-D of Part 2-1 of *the Act*.

1.15.30 Additional Conditions for *RTP Fees Offset*

If a *RTP Fees Offset* is provided as part of a *RTP Scholarship* specified in paragraph 1.15.5(1), the following additional conditions apply:

- (1) A student receiving *RTP Fees Offset* must not be receiving an equivalent award or scholarship from the Commonwealth designed to offset *HDR* fees.
- (2) *RTP Fees Offsets* for *domestic students* can be awarded at the discretion of a *HEP* although the process used must accord with these *Guidelines* and the fairness requirements in Subdivision 19-D of Part 2-1 of *the Act*.
- (3) *RTP Fees Offsets* for *overseas students* must only be awarded as a result of a competitive selection process. The nature of a competitive process is to be determined by a *HEP* although it must accord with these *Guidelines* and the fairness requirements in Subdivision 19-D of Part 2-1 of *the Act*.

1.15.30 Additional Conditions for Overseas Students

A *HEP* may only expend up to a maximum of 10 per cent of its *RTP* Grant Amount determined in paragraph 1.5.1 on the provision of *RTP Scholarships* to *overseas students*.

1.15.35 Offers for *RTP Scholarships*

A *HEP* must only offer a student a *RTP Scholarship*:

- (1) as a result of a process specified in paragraphs 1.15.25(7) and 1.15.30(2) and 1.15.30(3); or
- (2) as a result of the *HEP* agreeing to continue *RTP* support for a student who is transferring to that *HEP* and currently receiving a *RTP Scholarship*; or
- (3) if the student is a *Continuing Student*.

A *HEP* must offer a *RTP Scholarship* to a student in writing and include advice of the types of assistance and support being offered, the conditions and period of support of the *RTP Scholarship*, and the estimated annual value of Australian Government support provided for each type of *RTP Scholarship* support.

A *HEP* must also advise a student receiving a *RTP Scholarship* of any changes to *RTP Scholarship* support provided by the *HEP*.

1.15.40 Termination of *RTP Scholarship*

A *HEP* must terminate a student's *RTP Scholarship*:

- (1) If the student ceases to meet the eligibility criteria specified in paragraph 1.15 of these *Guidelines*, other than during a period in which a *suspension* has been approved; or
- (2) On completion of the *course of study*; or

(3) If a HEP determines that the student has not complied with a requirement specified in its *RTP Scholarship Policy* in relation to paragraph 1.20(10).

1.20 *RTP Scholarship Policy*

A *HEP* is responsible for the administration of *RTP Scholarships* and must make information about the processes, policies and conditions of scholarship readily and publicly available in a *RTP Scholarship Policy*. A *HEP* must make judgements, and provide support to students awarded *RTP Scholarships*, in accordance with its *RTP Scholarship Policy*.

A HEP's RTP Scholarship Policy must specifically identify:

- (1) A summary of the basic information for *RTP Scholarships* including but not limited to the information identified in these *Guidelines* in relation to eligibility criteria, types of support available, *RTP Stipend* rates, classes of students and periods of support;
- (2) The application, selection and offers processes for awarding *RTP* Scholarships, including a requirement that *RTP* Scholarships only be awarded through a publicly declared process;
- (3) Information on arrangements for *Continuing Students*, if applicable, in relation to paragraph 1.25;
- (4) The supervision and facilities provisions, including but not limited to:
 - a. the facilities and supervision that will be provided to each student awarded a *RTP Scholarship*; and
 - b. a code of supervisory practice for students undertaking a *HDR*;
- (5) Provisions for extensions in relation to paragraph 1.15.15;
- (6) Provisions for *suspensions*;
- (7) Provisions for paid leave for *RTP Stipends* in relation to paragraph 1.15.25(5);
- (8) Provisions that identify the circumstances in which a *HEP* will approve a student awarded a *RTP Scholarship* undertaking work outside the *HDR* subject;
- (9) Provisions for changes in the nature of a *RTP Scholarship* student's enrolment, including but not limited to:
 - a. changes in a student's fields of study;
 - b. transferring to or from another *HEP*;
 - c. changing from full-time to part-time or part-time to full-time;
 - d. converting from a *Research Masters* to a *Research Doctorate* degree, or from a *Research Doctorate* to a *Research Masters*;
- (10) The procedures for termination of a *RTP Scholarship* specified in paragraph 1.15.40, including any additional requirements in relation to paragraph 1.15.40(3); and

(11) The grievance procedures for dealing with complaints in relation to *RTP Scholarships*.

1.25 Arrangements for *Continuing Students*

A *HEP* must offer each *Continuing Student* a *RTP Scholarship* in a form that does not disadvantage the *Continuing Student* and provides at least equivalent support to that provided through predecessor Australian Government programs.

A HEP must offer a Continuing Student a RTP Scholarship as follows:

- (1) *domestic students* supported under the former Research Training Scheme must be offered *RTP Fee Offset* support for a period necessary to provide at least equivalent support to that offered under the Research Training Scheme
- (2) *overseas students* supported under the former International Postgraduate Research Scholarships must be offered *RTP Fee Offset* and *RTP Allowance* support for a period necessary to provide at least equivalent support to that offered under the International Postgraduate Research Scholarships.
- (3) students supported under the former Australian Postgraduate Awards must be offered *RTP Stipend* and *RTP Allowance* support for a period necessary to provide at least equivalent support to that offered under the Australian Postgraduate Awards.

Periods of support specified in 1.15.10 apply for *Continuing Students* based on *course of study* commencement dates.

1.30 High-Cost and Low-Cost Fields of Study

The high-cost and low-cost fields of study for the purposes of *RTP* grant amounts are defined by the *FOE*. High-cost *FOEs* are those set out in the table below and low-cost *FOEs* are those not listed in the table.

ASCED Code	ASCED Title
010300-010303	Physics and Astronomy
010500-010599	Chemical Sciences
010700-010799	Earth Sciences
010900-010999	Biological Sciences
019900-019999	Other Natural and Physical Sciences
030101	Manufacturing Engineering
030300-030399	Process and Resources Engineering
030501	Automotive Engineering
030701	Mechanical Engineering
030703	Industrial Engineering
030900-030999	Civil Engineering
031100-031199	Geomatic Engineering
031300	Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Technology
031301	Electrical Engineering
031303	Electronic Engineering
031305	Computer Engineering

031307	Communications Technologies
031501	Aerospace Engineering
031503	Aircraft Maintenance Engineering
031701	Maritime Engineering
039901	Environmental Engineering
039903	Biomedical Engineering
050000-059999	Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies
060100-060199	Medical Studies
060501	Pharmacy
060701	Dentistry
061101	Veterinary Studies
069903	Human Movement
090701	Psychology