



Graduate Research Internships

GRADUATE RESEARCH ACADEMY

February 2022

GUIDELINES ON GRADUATE RESEARCH INTERNSHIPS

Macquarie University encourages graduate research students to engage in industry/external internships during their candidature. This document states the principles for engaging in industry/external internships and the process to be followed for approval, whilst admitted to Master of Research Year 2 (MRes Y2), Master of Philosophy (MPhil) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs.

Students admitted to the Bachelor of Philosophy/Master of Research Year 1 (BPhil/MRes Y1) may be eligible to apply for an internship in the first year of the program through prescribed first year internship units and should contact their respective department for advice.

1. Definitions

The following terms are defined by the Australian Government in the [Tertiary Collection of Student Information \(TCSI\) Glossary](#) and are subject to change:

- 1.1 A **research internship** is currently defined as a 'position with a research end-user where a student has undertaken *R&D* related to their *HDR*. A *research internship* can be either paid or unpaid and can form part of the enrolment or be undertaken during an *HDR* period of suspension.'
- 1.2 A **research end-user** is currently defined as 'an individual, community or organisation external to academia that will directly use or directly benefit from the outcome, outputs, or results of the research.' For this document, the internship 'host organisation' is the research end-user.
- 1.3 **Research** means a research and experimental development (R&D) activity, which is an activity that satisfies all five core criteria:
 - to be aimed at new findings (novel)
 - to be based on original, not obvious, concepts and hypotheses (creative)
 - to be uncertain about the final outcomes (uncertain)
 - to be planned and budgeted (systematic)
 - to lead to results that could be possibly reproduced (transferable and/or reproducible).

The definition of **research and experimental development (R&D)** is further specified in the [Higher Education Research Data Collection \(HERDC\) Specifications](#)

2. Eligibility

- 2.1. Both domestic and international students are eligible to apply for and engage in internships.
- 2.2. Both full-time and part-time students are eligible to apply for and engage in internships.
- 2.3. PhD or MPhil students are eligible to engage in an internship only after they have achieved Confirmation of Candidature, or faculty equivalent.
- 2.4. For a student to receive approval to engage in an internship, they must be reported by the faculty as having made satisfactory progress in their program, be up to date with all project milestones, and meet the eligibility requirements for the internship.
- 2.5. Students must obtain formal approval prior to committing to an internship. Formal approval consists of:
 - 2.5.1. PhD and MPhil: Graduate Research Academy and Faculty (Principal supervisor and Department Director of Research Training)
 - 2.5.2. MRes Y2: Graduate Research Academy and Faculty (MRes Supervisor and MRes Adviser)

- 2.6. Students may undertake an internship on a paid or unpaid basis, in accordance with Fair Work Legislation.
- 2.7. A student in receipt of sponsorships or scholarships funded from outside the University must obtain written permission from the sponsor to undertake the internship.
- 2.8. Cotutelle or Joint PhD students require prior written approval to undertake an external internship from their partner institution.
- 2.9. Students wishing to engage in an internship with a host organisation located outside of Australia, or an entity of a foreign government located within Australia, must seek advice from the Graduate Research Academy prior to commencing discussions with a potential offshore host organisation.

3. Candidature Management

- 3.1. Insurance cover must be assured for the student during the term of the internship.
- 3.2. Internships must be detailed in a written agreement between the student, the University, and the host organisation, that covers the research and development (R&D) activities to be undertaken by the student with the host organisation, the duration of the internship, as well as the funding, travel (if applicable), intellectual property, and insurance arrangements, and WHS training and formal inductions (as relevant).
- 3.3. Internship opportunities should be identified early in candidature to drive early engagement with industry. For PhD students, it is recommended that internship agreements are established within 18 months of course commencement for full-time students, or within 36 months for part-time students. However, the timing of the internship itself should be flexible according to the individual requirements of each internship (subject to clauses 2.3, 3.4, and 3.5).
- 3.4. Students are discouraged from commencing an internship in the last six (6) months of their candidature or during any extension of candidature or scholarship, unless the intention for this was clearly indicated well beforehand, including in the application for extension if applicable, and accounted for in the completion plan.
- 3.5. A student may undertake an internship after they have submitted their thesis for examination but in this case, the internship should commence within four (4) weeks of submission and be completed before the examination outcome is approved by the Research and Research Training Committee.
- 3.6. It is recommended that internships for PhD and MPhil students are a minimum three (3) calendar months in duration, comprising of at least 60 days of engagement.
- 3.7. A student may undertake internships up to a total full-time equivalent duration of six (6) months during candidature (for PhD and MPhil) or three (3) months (for MRes Y2), and not for more than three (3) calendar months post thesis submission.
- 3.8. Subject to the criteria of the internship agreement and host organisation, an internship may be undertaken as a block of time (continuous and full-time) or on a part-time basis (for example one day per week). Where a part-time internship is more than 14 hours/ two standard working days per week, the student will be required to change their enrolment mode to part-time.
- 3.9. Subject to the criteria of the internship agreement and host organisation, an internship can be performed onsite with the host organisation, on-campus, or online.
- 3.10. Subject to the internship agreement and clause 3.8, a student's enrolment may continue without suspension/Leave of Absence while they are engaged in an internship, or they may apply for a Leave of Absence to undertake an internship, in accordance with the [Variations to Candidature Policy](#).
- 3.11. Unless a Leave of Absence or change of enrolment mode to part-time to undertake an internship is approved, delays to thesis submission and extensions of EWS date will not be approved on the grounds of an internship.

4. Additional Guidelines for Stipend Scholarship Holders

- 4.1. Subject to the [Conditions of Award](#) for the stipend scholarship, a student who engages in an internship that is **funded by the external host organisation** may elect to either:
- (a) Suspend their existing stipend scholarship for the duration of the internship and resume the stipend scholarship at the end of the internship (to retain scholarship tenure, the suspension of stipend must be taken with a period of Leave of Absence); or
 - (b) Where the internship is part-time and is less than 14 hours/ two standard working days per week, retain their full stipend scholarship for the duration of the internship, AND receive any payments for the internship. NOTE: students wishing to retain their full-time scholarship payments during an internship cannot take a Leave of Absence and must remain enrolled full-time; or
 - (c) Where the internship is part-time and is greater than 14 hours/ two standard working days per week, requiring a change of enrolment mode to part-time, the student may be exceptionally approved to retain their existing stipend scholarship at 50% of their full-time rate, in line with the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#). The student may also receive any payments for the internship.
- 4.2. Subject to the [Conditions of Award](#) for the Stipend Scholarship, a student who engages in an **unpaid internship** may elect to either:
- (a) Suspend their stipend scholarship for the duration of the internship and resume the scholarship at the end of the internship (to retain scholarship tenure the suspension of stipend must be taken with a period of Leave of Absence); or
 - (b) Retain their full-time stipend scholarship for the duration of the internship, provided they remain enrolled full-time i.e., do not take a Leave of Absence or change their enrolment mode to part-time; or
 - (c) Where the internship is part-time and is greater than 14 hours/ two standard working days per week, requiring a change of enrolment mode to part-time, the student may be exceptionally approved to retain their existing stipend scholarship at 50% of their full-time rate, in line with the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#).
- 4.3. The University may choose to provide scholarship funding to support an internship. Students with an existing University-funded stipend scholarship would not normally be entitled to receive their existing stipend scholarship at the same time as receiving University funding to undertake an internship. In these cases, the student would be expected to suspend their existing stipend scholarship for the duration of the internship and resume the scholarship at the end of the internship (to retain scholarship tenure, the suspension of stipend must be taken with a period of Leave of Absence).
- 4.4. For students receiving scholarship support through the Australian Government's Research Training Program (RTP), any internship undertaken outside of a suspension/ Leave of Absence where the student continues to receive RTP scholarship funding, will count toward the maximum period of support, in accordance with the [Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#).

5. Additional Guidelines for International Students

- 5.1. International students must seek independent advice from the Department of Home Affairs regarding the impact of undertaking an internship, or Internship Leave on their student visa.
- 5.2. An international student who wishes to undertake an internship after submitting their thesis must hold a valid visa for the duration of the internship and commence their internship within four (4) weeks of thesis submission.

- 5.3. Extension of Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE) will not be provided for internships undertaken post thesis submission.

6. General

- 6.1. While internships are encouraged by Macquarie University, they are not a mandatory part of the graduate research degree.
- 6.2. The Commonwealth Government announced changes to the RTP element of Research Block Grants through the 2021-2022 Budget. The RTP formula has been adjusted to financially reward universities for PhD students that graduate having undertaken an 'eligible internship'. The criterion for an eligible internship is set out in the [Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines Amendment \(Research\) 2021](#). Wherever possible, the University will aim to ensure that PhD internships meet the criteria of an 'eligible internship', however, other models that add value to students, supervisors, and the University community will also be supported (as appropriate).