

HIGHER DEGREE BY RESEARCH (HDR) SCHOLARSHIP RANKING GUIDELINES



August 2025

PURPOSE

These guidelines are used to assist with the assessment of domestic Higher Degree by Research (HDR) scholarship applications received by the Student Finance and Scholarships Office. The Flinders University HDR Scholarship Committee will review, assess, and endorse scholarship offers based on recommendations put forward by Colleges.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will approve all scholarship offers based on the recommendation of the Flinders University HDR Scholarship Committee.

HOW APPLICATIONS WILL BE ASSESSED

Applicants must check their eligibility for admission into a specific HDR (PhD or Master by Research) as stipulated in the HDR Admission and Enrolment Procedures and Course Rules before proceeding further with their scholarship application.

HDR scholarship applications are ranked using the scoring mechanism in these guidelines. Applications for scholarships are competitive and assessed based on evidence of academic merit and performance, and research output. It is expected that only exceptional applicants in their first HDR will be recommended for a scholarship.

Scholarship offers are subject to applicants being made an offer of admission to the relevant HDR and receiving approval from the relevant College.

Applicants who do not follow the prescribed application process, do not provide supporting documentation by the relevant closing date, provide insufficient evidence to support their application or are unable to meet the requirements described in this document will be excluded from the scholarship ranking process.

HDR SCHOLARSHIP METRIC APPLICATION SCORING MECHANISM

The aim of the following scoring mechanism is to identify as objectively as possible the applicants most likely to complete a high-quality HDR through demonstrating excellence.

The relevant College Committees will assess and allocate scores against these criteria based on the evidence provided by the applicant. Representative/s from the relevant Colleges will review the score and make recommendations to the University HDR Scholarship Committee.

Scholarship applications will be ranked in accordance with the Australian Commonwealth Government Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2017 and the Flinders University RTP Scholarships Administrative Rules, section 4.2.

There are two pathways for assessment of applications (Pathway A or B). The Chair of the HDR Scholarships Committee will assess the equity assessment statements independently.

Pathway A is for applicants with:

- Australian Honours degree First-Class or Upper Second Class (Division 2A) or equivalent completed in the past three years; and
- with a GPA of 6.25 in their most recent 36 units of coursework study.

Pathway B is for all other applicants.

For Scholarship ranking purposes, the definition of Honours and equivalence is in Appendix 1.

Scoring of Pathway A and B is completed separately. The HDR Scholarships Committee reserves the right to move applicants between Pathways to maximise the likelihood of a successful outcome.

The allocation of the number of Scholarships will be at the discretion of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR APPLICANTS | PATHWAY A

SECTION 1: QUALIFICATIONS

1. Applicants must have completed **Honours or equivalent** (refer to Appendix 1) **three or less years ago**.
2. Applicants must have achieved a **GPA of 6.25 or higher out of 7** in their most recent 36 units of coursework study OR must be able to **demonstrate equivalency**. Refer to Appendix 2 for equivalence scoring in courses that use Non-Graded Pass or Appendix 3 for disciplines that produce Non-Traditional Research Outputs (NTROs). Any non-Flinders GPA will be converted to a Flinders GPA out of 7.
 - a) First Class Honours or Master (High Distinction) (or equivalent) in the past 3 years **POINTS: 20**
 - b) Upper Second Class (Division 2A) Honours or Master (Distinction) in the past 3 years **POINTS: 18**

SECTION 2: OTHER BONUS POINT

A maximum of one additional point can be awarded for evidence of national, international, or Institution-wide awards for excellence in research such as an:

- a) Australian research award in the discipline
- b) Outstanding Thesis Award
- c) Internationally recognised award – e.g., for a conference presentation or other **POINTS: 1**

SECTION 3: EQUITY ASSESSMENT

A maximum of one additional point can be awarded to applicants for equity reasons.

For example:

- applicants who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- applicants who believe their academic performance has been adversely impacted due to reasons beyond their control, such as complex caring responsibilities, disability, or medical reasons

Applicants who wish to be considered for the additional point for equity reasons should include a statement (strict maximum of 250-words) addressed to the Chair of the Scholarships Committee in support of their request. Further evidence may be requested by the Scholarships Committee. **POINTS: 1**

SECTION 4: COURSEWORK PERFORMANCE

Applicants will be awarded additional points equivalent to their GPA (out of 7) from their most recent 36 units of coursework study. This will be conducted by the Student Finance and Scholarships Office.

Any non-Flinders GPA will be converted to a Flinders GPA out of 7. **POINTS: Max. 7**

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR APPLICANTS | PATHWAY B

SECTION 1: QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants must have completed an **Honours degree or equivalent** (refer to Appendix 1) **more than 3 years ago**.

1. First Class Honours (or equivalent) **POINTS: 20**
2. Upper Second Class (Division 2A) Honours (or equivalent) **POINTS: 18**

SECTION 2: COURSEWORK PERFORMANCE

Applicants will be awarded additional points equivalent to their GPA (out of 7) from their most recent 36 units of coursework study. This will be conducted by the Student Finance and Scholarships Office.

Any non-Flinders GPA will be converted to a Flinders GPA out of 7. **POINTS: Max. 7**

SECTION 3: RESEARCH OUTPUTS

A maximum of **four** authored research outputs in total will be considered toward the applicant's final score. All listed outputs must meet the eligibility criteria for one of the types below and will be verified according to the [Excellence in Research for Australian \(ERA\) guidelines](#). Research outputs of up to *five years* from their publication date will be considered. Research outputs older than five years will not be counted.

Applicants are asked to provide a copy of the authored research output which includes evidence of where the work was published, date of publication etc. If a copy of the output is not available, then a URL must be provided. It should be noted that where a copy of the work or a URL is not provided, the output will not be considered. Research outputs must be refereed/peer-reviewed, with each accompanied by a completed cover sheet. The criteria for each type of output are detailed below and points will be applied at the discretion of the Scholarships Committee. **NB:** The Main Author will be assessed based on information provided in the cover sheet/s.

1. A book must be a major work of scholarship, offered for sale, have an ISBN, be written by a single author or joint authors who share responsibility for the book, have been published by a reputable publisher or with evidence of peer review if published online only. **Verification documentation required:** contents, preface and introduction and pages showing all bibliographic information (ISBN, authors, publishers, all dates referring to copyright, publication, printing and distribution).

Main Author **POINTS: 6**
Co-Author/other Author **POINTS: 4**

2. Book chapter in a book must be a contribution consisting of substantially new material, in an edited compilation in which the material is subject to editorial scrutiny. It must be in a book offered for sale, have an ISBN and have been published by a reputable publisher, or with evidence of peer review if published online only. **Verification documentation required:** book chapter, contents, preface and introduction and pages showing all bibliographic information (ISBN, authors, publishers, all dates referring to copyright, publication, printing and distribution).

Main Author **POINTS: 5**
Co-Author/other Author **POINTS: 3**

3. Refereed Journal Articles must be a research article published in a scholarly peer-reviewed journal with an ISSN and listed as being refereed/peer-reviewed. **Verification documentation required:** article or post-print of article/contribution, pages showing bibliographic information (journal title, dates were not provided in the article or post print), byline, evidence of being refereed/peer-reviewed.

Main Contributing Author **POINTS: 6**
Co-Author/other Author **POINTS: 4**

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR APPLICANTS | PATHWAY B

4. Technical Reports. A technical report must be a report that contributes to new research scholarship¹ that is produced for government agencies, non-profit, non-governmental organisations, commercial companies or educational institutions.

Main Author: **POINTS: 4**
Other author: **POINTS: 2**

5. Other peer-reviewed research documents and peer reviewed conference abstracts in the public domain.

Main Author **POINTS: 2**
Co-Author/other Author **POINTS: 1**

6. Non-refereed works, conference abstracts (non-refereed), papers, reports or other works which have been submitted.

Main Author **POINTS: 1**
Co-Author/other Author **POINTS: 0.5**

7. PATENTS for specific products or processes that have been granted for the first time to the applicant.

POINTS: 1

¹Definition of new research: creation of new knowledge and/or use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions, and understandings.

² NB. Peer review is not a condition for technical reports as it is not common practice to record this even when reports have been peer reviewed.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR APPLICANTS | PATHWAY B

8. CREATIVE WORKS (below only applicable to creative arts or Non Traditional Research Output NTRO applicants, please refer to Appendix 3).

A. Visual Art

<i>Equivalent to</i>		<i>Points</i>	
A	Solo exhibition in a major commercial gallery, e.g., a gallery that is a member of the Commercial Galleries Association of Australia. It would normally take 1 year to 18 months to produce such a body of original work.	Book	6
B	Solo exhibition in a competitive venue, e.g. regional public gallery or a university gallery.	Refereed Publication	5
C	Participation in a group exhibition at the highest institutional level that has national/international significance. Highest level of curated process or jury.		4
D	Participation in a group exhibition at a creditable venue that has a substantially curated or juried process, e.g., a regional art gallery or a major prize.		2
E	Curator of a substantial exhibition in a Gallery, e.g., regional art gallery or a major institution.		2

B. Contemporary Music

<i>Equivalent to</i>		<i>Points</i>	
A	A 70-minute digital representation of original music, commercially released on a major label.	Book	6
B	Twenty minutes of original music, commercially released or grant funded, or receiving public airplay on commercial or public radio, or performed live at a recognised venue or festival, or used in a film or video with a television broadcast or theatrical release	Refereed Publication	5
C	The original music of fewer than 20 minutes' duration (as in B above).	Other peer-reviewed research	2

C. Creative Writing/Film/Performance

<i>Equivalent to</i>		<i>Points</i>	
A	A single-authored book, film script, documentary or series published by an industry recognised publishing, production or broadcasting company. (typically 3-7 years' work)	Book	6
B	Book chapter, essay or creative work, including a series of poems, prose fiction or short biographical piece published in a refereed journal or anthology of writings.	Refereed Publication	5
C	Creative work, script, documentary or drama published in an anthology or performance equivalent, in a recognised publishing company, community broadcaster or theatre. Includes editing a refereed anthology.	Other peer-reviewed research documents	2

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR APPLICANTS | PATHWAY B

SECTION 4: BONUS POINT

A maximum of one additional point can be awarded with evidence of National, International, or Institution-wide awards for excellence in research such as an:

- a) Australian research award in the discipline
- b) Outstanding Thesis Award
- c) Internationally recognised award – e.g., for a conference presentation or other

POINTS: 1

SECTION 5: EQUITY ASSESSMENT

A maximum of one additional point can be awarded to applicants for equity reasons. For example:

- applicants who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander,
- applicants who believe their academic performance has been adversely impacted due to reasons beyond their control, such as complex caring responsibilities, disability, or medical reasons.

Applicants who wish to be considered for the additional point for equity reasons should include a statement (strict maximum of 250-words) addressed to the Chair of the Scholarships Committee in support of their request. Further evidence may be requested by the Scholarships Committee.

POINTS: 1

APPENDIX 1 – DEFINITION OF HONOURS AND EQUIVALENCE

Bachelor Honours Degree qualifications are located at level 8 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF):

- The volume of learning of a Bachelor Honours Degree is typically 1 year following a Bachelor Degree. A Bachelor Honours Degree may also be embedded in a Bachelor Degree, typically as an additional year.
- Research must be evident in all Bachelor Honours Degrees.
- As it depicts a qualification type, the term 'Honours' may not be used to recognise meritorious achievement for an AQF qualification.

For Flinders University HDR scholarship eligibility:

- Honours must include the execution of a formally assessed/examined piece of research to the value of at least 18 units (half a year of full-time study).
- Scholarship applicants who have not completed a Bachelor Honours Degree qualification need to provide evidence of an AQF 8 or 9** qualification (or equivalent international qualification) containing a formally assessed/examined piece of research to the value of at least 18 units (half a year full-time study).

First Class Honours equivalence - example of qualification:

- A Master degree or Postgraduate Diploma that includes the execution of a formally assessed/examined piece of research to the value of at least 18 units (half a year of full-time study), achieving High Distinction.

Upper Second Class Honours/ Honours 2A equivalence – example of qualification:

- A Master degree or Postgraduate Diploma that includes the execution of a formally assessed/examined piece of research to the value of at least 18 units (half a year of full-time study), achieving Distinction.

**NB It is expected that only exceptional applicants in their first HDR will be recommended for a scholarship: applicants who have already completed an AQF Level 9 - Masters Degree (Research) (i.e. HDR with minimum 2/3 research component) may be deemed ineligible.

APPENDIX 2: FIRST CLASS HONOURS EQUIVALENCE AHPRA

AHPRA REGISTERED AND REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPLICANTS

First Class Honours Equivalence - applicants who meet criteria for registration with Australian Health Professionals Regulation Agency (AHPRA)-registered applicants and SELF REGULATED Health Professionals need to provide evidence of:

Research training during their degree (e.g. Advanced Studies, any form of assessable thesis work, or evidence of *specialty college fellowship training* with research experience);

PLUS

Demonstrate at least **one peer-reviewed research output** as the **Main author** (manuscript either accepted or already published with evidence); OR

Demonstrate at **least three peer-reviewed research outputs** as a **co-author/ other author** (manuscript either accepted or already published with evidence), along with a clear narrative of involvement with a research group (this can include a referee report stating the applicant's role in the manuscript/s).

Application of GPA scoring:

Context: Applicants from clinical backgrounds may have undergraduate sequences which are solely NGP (non-graded pass). This should not disadvantage clinician PhDs from accessing scholarships, where there is an expectation of Academic Excellence, e.g., throughout medical degrees, that are awarded NGP. To address this and apply a GPA score, refer to the following.

Clinicians who meet criteria for registration with AHPRA and have an undergraduate sequence which includes **Graded** topics, shall have these topics applied for GPA calculations.

OR

Clinicians who meet criteria for registration with AHPRA and have an undergraduate or graduate degree program for which **Non-Graded** results are provided, shall receive a *default GPA of 6* (distinction equivalent) for assessment of any GPA scoring.

APPENDIX 3: FIRST CLASS HONOURS EQUIVALENCE NON-TRADITIONAL RESEARCH OUTPUTS (NTROs)

First Class Honours Equivalence for applicants in Non-Traditional Outputs is only relevant to creative arts or NTROs applicants - need to provide evidence of:

Research training during their degree and any assessable thesis work

PLUS

Demonstrate a **creative non-traditional output** as an individual output that achieves a point *scoring of 5 for quantity and 5 for quality* according to the NTRO guidelines.

AND

Demonstrate exegesis potential through an account of the NTROs or Industry-led Research Practice as research.

ELIGIBLE NON-TRADITIONAL RESEARCH OUTPUT TYPES POINTS

Points: Non-Traditional Research

Outputs	Quantity Points	Quality
Major Individual Output	5	5
Minor Individual Output	1	1
Major Portfolio	5	5
Minor Portfolio	1	1

OUTPUT SCALE

(i) brief descriptors of each NTRO area and NTROs may be submitted as a single item or as an individual creative work (equal to one research output); or as a portfolio of works exhibited as a cohesive/thematic collection of the work of a single creator (also equal to one research output). Refer to [Excellence in Research for Australia Non Traditional Outputs \(NTROS\)](#)

Decisions about whether a single item or portfolio is 'Major' or 'Minor', 'quality' or 'N/A' will be guided by

(ii) a database of historical examples of points allocated.

Major: Individual Output

The creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings must be substantial.

Individual Output	Details	Possible Examples
Film and Digital Media	<p>The creation of a new screen, media or moving-image work of complexity and sophistication in technique, scope and scale and in which the researcher is considered the ‘chief investigator’.</p> <p>‘New screen work’ may include narrative feature film, feature-length documentary, experimental or avant-garde work or work intended for gallery exhibition that is of a highly complex nature, that is sustained.</p> <p>May screen on a recognised streaming platform, in a major national or international festival or showcase, or major recognised gallery, and/or may be acknowledged through national/international prizes and awards.</p> <p>May show significant audience interaction through online platforms.</p> <p>As a guideline, the work should reflect more than a year of sustained work.</p>	<p>Dan O’Connell, dir., and Gwenda Young, prod. <i>Movie Memories</i> [documentary film]. Dublin: Creative Ireland/UCC, 2018. http://corkmoviememories.com/</p> <p>Amos Gebhardt, <i>Divided Worlds</i> [video installation]. Adelaide: Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art, 2018. https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/2018-adelaide-biennial-australian-art-divided-worlds/</p> <p>Richard Jasek, dir. <i>Getting Their Acts Together</i> [documentary film]. Adelaide: SLA Films, 2020.</p>
Creative Writing	<p>A professionally edited novel, volume of poetry, collection of short stories, work of literary non-fiction or script for a major play or film.</p> <p>May be published in print or spoken word by a commercial publisher or a recognised specialist independent publisher, staged by a recognised theatre company or performed at a recognised national or international festival, or screened at a recognised national or international festival.</p> <p>As a guideline, the outcome should reflect more than a year of sustained work.</p>	<p>Sean Williams. <i>Her Perilous Mansion</i>. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2020.</p> <p>Alex Vickery-Howe. <i>Watchlist</i>. Sydney: Currency Press, 2020.</p> <p>(Amy Matthews writing as) Tess LeSue. <i>Bound for Glory</i>. New York: Penguin/Berkley, 2019.</p>
Translation	<p>A translation of a novel, volume of poetry, collection of short stories, major play or work of non-fiction.</p> <p>May be published by a recognised commercial publisher or a recognised independent publisher specialising in literary translation.</p> <p>As a guideline, the publication should reflect more than a year of sustained work.</p>	
Theatre and Performance	<p>Performance in/creation of a new work involving complexity and sophistication in technique, scope or scale and in which the researcher is considered the ‘chief investigator’.</p> <p>May be programmed by a recognised company/ national/international festival/venue; acknowledged</p>	<p>Sarah Peters. <i>Blister</i> [play]. 80 mins duration. Performed at Holden Street Theatres, 31 July–3 August, 2019. http://holdenstreettheatres.com/index.php/What-s-On/history/blister</p>

	through national/international prizes/awards; nationally or internationally broadcast; an ongoing series of significant site-specific events.	
Music	<p>Major composition of 30 minutes or more performed at a recognised venue, published by a recognised publisher or released by a recognised music label.</p> <p>May be acknowledged through national/international prizes/awards; a work nationally or internationally broadcast.</p>	(Sean Williams under the name) Theadelphiaan. <i>Isolation</i> [album]. Portland: Projekt Records, 2020.
Visual Arts	<p>Visual artwork in an appropriate medium expressing ideas that lead to new knowledge and/or advance the development and understanding of the creative arts.</p> <p>May offer a new contribution to broader cultural debates and/or develop or extend art historical/theoretical debates surrounding specific genres of creative production (e.g., painting, video, ceramics).</p> <p>May be acknowledged through national/international prizes/awards; nationally or internationally broadcast; presented in a venue recognised nationally or internationally by peers in the discipline (e.g., a major festival/gallery location); commissioned/funded by a distinguished public or private body.</p>	