UQ and RTP Research Scholarships Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) This Procedure outlines the terms, conditions and processes associated with the award and management of research scholarships at The University of Queensland (UQ), including those awarded via the Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP). This Procedure applies to all higher degree by research (HDR) candidates enrolled at UQ who are in receipt of a research scholarship that is managed by UQ.

Section 2 - Process and Key Controls

(2) All research scholarships administered by UQ must be conducted in accordance with the principles and requirements described in the UQ and RTP Research Scholarships Policy and those described in this Procedure.

Section 3 - Key Requirements

Eligibility, Selection, and Award

Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship

(3) To be eligible for a Research Training Program (RTP) scholarship, the applicant must apply on UQ's online application and must satisfy the eligibility requirements of the Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines.

(4) If the enrolling Academic Organisational Unit (AOU) has the appropriate academic expertise, facilities, funding and resources to support the applicant in their proposed research project, the Head of enrolling AOU may recommend the applicant to the Graduate School for scholarship consideration. The AOU may also consider strategic alignment, and diversity and inclusion priorities.

(5) If the enrolling AOU does not recommend the applicant for scholarship consideration, they are to advise the applicant in writing.

(6) The Dean, Graduate School, or their nominee, chairs a Scholarship Selection Committee that conducts a merit based, competitive process in order to award living allowance stipends for all candidates and tuition fee offsets for international candidates.

(7) Applicants for scholarship will be scored and ranked according to criteria detailed in the HDR Scholarship Selection Criteria Matrix.

(8) Domestic candidates whose proposed candidature meets the objectives of the Research Training Program scheme will be awarded an RTP Tuition Fee Offset Scholarship without the need for Committee review.

(9) All scholarship nominees will be advised of the outcome in writing. Feedback will be provided to applicants upon request.

(10) All scholarship recipients will be provided with an offer letter from the UQ Graduate School, which will specify

terms and conditions for the scholarship.

UQ Research Training Scholarship

(11) Both the Australian Government RTP Scholarship and the UQ Research Training Scholarship, as outlined under clauses 3 to 10 above, utilise a similar application and selection process that meets the requirements to award either scholarship.

(12) The same terms and conditions for duration, leave, extension, employment and other entitlements under this Procedure document apply to both the Australian Government RTP Scholarship and the UQ Research Training Scholarship.

Other UQ Research Scholarships

(13) Scholarship providers must conduct a competitive process* for selecting scholarship recipients.

(14) As a minimum, to meet the requirements of a competitive process, the scholarship must be advertised on the UQ approved website for at least two weeks.

(15) The scholarship advertisement should provide details on how to apply.

(16) It is acknowledged that many externally awarded scholarship schemes will conduct their own merit-based selection processes.

(17) Scholarship providers must specify to the UQ Graduate School the nature of the competitive process and the successful recipient/s.

(18) All recipients of UQ administered research scholarships will be provided with an offer letter from the UQ Graduate School, which will include standard terms and conditions.

(19) An international recipient may be provided with a tuition fee offset if the living allowance stipend meets the minimum terms and conditions outlined elsewhere in this Procedure.

(20) It is acknowledged that an externally awarded scholarship scheme will have its own terms and conditions which may differ to those awarded by UQ.

*Top up scholarships excluded.

Commencement

(21) Recipients must formally accept their scholarship offer as requested.

(22) The scholarship offer will lapse where a recipient is not enrolled in the HDR program by the census date of the research quarter specified in the offer letter.

(23) For recipients already enrolled in the HDR program, the scholarship offer will lapse where the scholarship has not been accepted within three months of the date of award.

Duration

(24) Scholarship payments continue for the duration specified in the offer letter or under the scholarship rules. The scholarship is subject to satisfactory progress in the recipient’s HDR program.

(25) The tuition fee offset scholarship will provide full tuition fee cover for:

a. two years full-time equivalent (FTE) in the Master of Philosophy (MPhil) program;
b. three years and six months FTE in the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program;
c. the duration specified in the program rules for a professional doctorate (research) program; or
d. a possible extension of up to 6 months (to a maximum of 4 years FTE), which will be available for PhD students, with provision of a plan for completion.

(26) Tuition fees, as detailed in the offer of admission, will be charged on expiry of the tuition fee offset scholarship for the remainder of the program of study.

(27) The duration of a living allowance scholarship is:

a. two years FTE in the MPhil program;
b. three years and six months FTE in the PhD program; or
c. the duration specified in the program rules for a professional doctorate (research) program.

(28) The duration of a scholarship will be reduced by any periods of study undertaken:

a. towards the degree prior to the commencement of the scholarship; or
b. towards the degree during suspension of the scholarship payment where the candidate remains actively enrolled in the program.

(29) Periods of leave, including additional sick leave as prescribed under clauses 81 to 87, and parental leave, as prescribed under clauses 88 to 96, are added to the duration of the recipient's scholarship.

(30) For the purpose of calculating the recipient’s scholarship duration and leave entitlements, the recipient is deemed to conduct research five days a week, from Monday to Friday.

(31) Approved placements will not affect the payment rate of the RTP living allowance.

(32) Unless otherwise stated in the scholarship rules, scholarship recipients are not eligible for an extension of the scholarship.

Living Allowance Stipends

(33) Unless otherwise stated in the scholarship rules, the stipend rate will be at the rate displayed for the current year on the Scholarships for PhD and MPhil Students website as approved by the Vice-Chancellor. The rate will fall within the range defined by the Australian Government RTP Scholarship stipend guidelines at the Research Training Program website.

(34) In strategic scholarship rounds for identified groups (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students), a stipend rate of up to the maximum full-time Australian Government RTP rate and duration of 4 years may be provided.

(35) The base full-time UQ Scholarship stipend rate is indexed annually taking effect from 1 January.

(36) The part-time stipend rate is at 50% of the base full-time UQ Scholarship stipend rate.

(37) Stipends are paid into the recipient’s nominated Australian bank account fortnightly.

Top Up Scholarships

(38) Top Up rates are not indexed annually.

(39) Stipends are paid into the recipient's nominated Australian bank account fortnightly.

(40) A top up scholarship can only be administered where a candidate is already receiving a base stipend.

COVID-19 Impact Extension

(41) HDR candidates in receipt of a RTP Stipend or UQRT Stipend, and whose research has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic may be eligible to apply for an extension of their living stipend of 3 months for PhD students, or 6 weeks extension for MPhil students. The COVID Impact Extension will extend the stipend and tuition fee scholarship to 3.75 years (FTE) for PhD candidates and 25.5 months (FTE) for MPhil candidates. No further extensions are available after this period.

(42) To be eligible for this extension, applicants must be enrolled in a HDR program at UQ and have obtained confirmation prior to 1 March 2020.

(43) Applicants for the COVID Impact Extension must demonstrate that their research has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and that despite efforts to adjust their project, additional time is required. HDR Research Progress Reports must have been lodged in the Researcher Data Management System (RDM) and must be provided with the application in addition to a work plan for the period of the extension.

(44) The COVID Impact Extension cannot be held concurrently or consecutively with another living stipend, including the Career Development Scholarship, and the Placement Scholarship.

(45) Full guidelines for the COVID Impact Extension are available at the Adjusting Your Project website.

Placement Scholarship Extension

(46) For HDR candidates who commenced from 1 January 2022, a 3-month Placement Scholarship Extension is available to all PhD candidates who meet the following criteria:

a. register intent to undertake a placement within the first 18 months of candidature; and
b. complete a 60-day placement with an eligible host organisation; and
c. currently hold a scholarship administered by UQ.

(47) Full guidelines for the Placement Scholarship Extension are available at the UQ PhD Industry Placement Scholarship website.

Career Development Scholarship

(48) To apply for a Career Development Scholarship, a candidate must have commenced their program before 1 January 2022, be receiving a UQ awarded stipend at the time of application and not yet have submitted their thesis. For thesis submission, see Higher Degree by Research Examination Procedure.

(49) Applications for the Career Development Scholarship must demonstrate that the recipient has engaged significantly, in a sustained manner throughout candidature, in the Career Development Framework. Specifically, to be eligible, applicants must undertake a placement which has been approved by the Dean, Graduate School prior to commencement of the placement activity (for full guidelines see UQ Career Development Scholarship Extension Guidelines), agree to undertake an oral examination, and to submit their thesis by 3.75 years FTE. The candidate's progress must also be otherwise satisfactory.

(50) Applications for the Career Development Scholarship must be endorsed by the candidate's Principal Advisor and the Head of enrolling AOU.

(51) To apply for the Career Development Scholarship the candidate must have completed all milestones.

(52) Applications for the Career Development Scholarship must be received by the UQ Graduate School at least 4 weeks prior to the scholarship expiry date. Applications for extension received later than this will not be approved.

(53) The Career Development Scholarship consists of a living stipend and tuition fee offset for 6 months.

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) Allowances

(54) UQ Graduate School scholarships for international recipients intending to study in Australia on a student visa will include an allowance for single cover only.

(55) OSHC will be provided for program duration as specified by the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs.

(56) OSHC coverage is fixed at acceptance. Upgrades from to single coverage to dual family or multi family will not be available.

(57) Unless otherwise stated in the scholarship rules, other UQ research scholarships do not include an OSHC allowance.

RTP Acknowledgement

(58) Recipients of an Australian Government RTP Scholarship stipend and/or a Australian Government RTP Tuition Fee Offset Scholarship are required to acknowledge the Australian Government's contribution when, at any time during or after completion of the HDR program, the recipient, HDR advisor(s), or any other party publishes or produces material such as books, articles, newsletters, or other literary or artistic works which relate to the research project carried out by the recipient of the RTP Scholarship.

(59) The acknowledgment must appear in a prominent place and in an appropriate form and include mention of the recipient's support through an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship..

Enrolment

(60) Unless otherwise stated in the scholarship rules, a scholarship is granted on the condition that the recipient enrols full-time in the HDR program.

(61) Scholarship recipients enrolled full-time are required to engage in research and study for the equivalent of a standard five-day working week, between the hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday, for at least 48 weeks a year. The actual working hours are to be negotiated with the recipient's advisory team and the enrolling AOU.

(62) Scholarship recipients enrolled part-time are required to engage in research and study for the equivalent of up to 50% of the full-time rate prescribed in above clause 61. The actual pattern of research and study may vary depending on the recipient's personal circumstances and other commitments. The actual working hours are to be negotiated with the recipient's advisory team and the enrolling AOU.

(63) Scholarship recipients are not required to complete timesheets on the hours worked; however, they are responsible for maintaining satisfactory progress in their HDR program.

(64) The Dean, Graduate School may approve a recipient to hold a stipend scholarship while enrolled part-time, where reasons may include family caring commitments, a medical condition (a medical certificate will be required), or other circumstances that limit the student's capacity to undertake full-time study. To support diversity and inclusion, candidates who may be unable to study full-time, including students who have a disability or are from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, will also be considered. Candidates applying to receive a part-time research scholarship will be asked to supply this information in their scholarship application.

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(65) Part time stipend scholarships will have tax withheld in accordance with the relevant tax legislation.

(66) Students who hold a tuition fee offset scholarship only (with no stipend scholarship) may select to change enrolment to part-time for any reason.

(67) The Dean, Graduate School may approve a recipient to hold a scholarship part-time while enrolled on an approved concurrent enrolment program where enrolment on the concurrent program is full-time.

(68) Applications to hold a stipend scholarship while enrolled part-time must be endorsed by the recipient's advisory team and Head of Enrolling AOU. See Higher Degree by Research Candidature Procedure on how to change attendance load.

(69) If the Dean, Graduate School approves a recipient to hold a scholarship while enrolled part-time, the approval only applies while the circumstances specified in the application remain in effect.

Attendance Mode

(70) Domestic scholarship recipients may be permitted to change their attendance mode to remote candidature when they are required to conduct their research away from one of UQ's three main campuses (St Lucia, Gatton, or Herston).

(71) Requests for remote candidature must be received by the UQ Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the period of remote candidature. All requests will be considered by the Dean, Graduate School and must be supported by the recipient's advisory team and the Head of Enrolling AOU.

(72) Scholarship recipients who wish to change to remote candidature for personal reasons may be required to relinquish their stipend scholarship.

Employment and Other Funding

(73) Stipend scholarship recipients may undertake additional work commitments or paid employment within the hours specified in clause 61 with the approval of their advisory team.

(74) Stipend scholarship recipients may undertake additional work commitments or paid employment outside the hours specified in clause 61 only with the approval of the advisory team and the Head of Enrolling AOU. There are no restrictions on the number of hours the recipient may work outside the hours specified in clause 61 as long as it does not impact on the recipient's ability to maintain satisfactory progress in their HDR program.

(75) Stipend scholarship recipients must not be receiving income from another scholarship or grant to support their general living costs while undertaking their HDR program if that income is greater than 75% of their stipend. Any scholarship funding received in excess of 75% of the UQ living allowance stipend will be deducted from the UQ living allowance stipend. Income unrelated to the candidate's HDR program or income received for the candidate's HDR program but not for the purposes of supporting general living costs is not to be taken into account. Income from paid employment as set out in above clauses 73 and 74 is not to be taken into account.

(76) Any additional tuition fee, living stipend, OSHC, or top-up scholarships received from other awards or scholarships must be declared to the UQ Graduate School upon receipt of the offer from the awarding body.

(77) An overpayment of UQ scholarship may result in a request for repayment.

Scholarship Leave

(78) Unless otherwise prescribed in the scholarship rules, a scholarship recipient is entitled to the following types of leave:

a. Recreation leave
b. Personal/sick leave
c. Parental leave

(79) All scholarship leave types must be requested through the University's pay and leave system, Workday.

Recreation Leave

(80) A scholarship recipient is entitled to 20 working days (FTE) paid recreation leave each year of the scholarship, which may be accrued but must be taken during the period of the scholarship and may not be used to extend the scholarship.

Personal/Sick Leave

(81) A recipient is entitled to 10 working days of paid leave each year of the scholarship to cover instances of physical or mental illness and caring responsibilities for immediate family.

(82) Personal/sick leave may be accrued but must be taken during the period of the scholarship and may not be used to extend the scholarship.

(83) A recipient must apply to their Principal Advisor for approval to take personal/sick leave where the duration of the sick leave is 10 working days or less.

(84) A recipient may be entitled to an additional 60 working days personal/sick leave within the duration of the scholarship for periods of personal/sick leave exceeding the accrued personal/sick leave.

(85) A recipient must apply for approval to take personal/sick leave where the duration of the leave is more than 10 working days. The application must be made in the official UQ system:

a. a medical certificate or letter from a specialist specifying the nature of the illness and the period or approximate period during which the recipient will be unable to work on their research; and
b. the endorsement of the recipient’s Principal Advisor.

(86) Applications submitted outside of the eligibility requirements may not be approved and repayment of scholarship funds provided during the period of non-approved leave may be required.

(87) A recipient’s scholarship stipend payments continue for periods of approved personal/sick leave. For periods of sick leave exceeding 10 working days that have been taken in a continuous period, the scholarship duration is increased by the amount of approved sick leave taken.

Parental Leave

(88) Students who have completed 12 months of their scholarship are entitled to paid parental leave during the scholarship.

(89) For the purposes of the conditions relating to parental leave, ‘child’ means a child of the scholarship recipient under the age of one year, except for adoption of a child where ‘child’ means a person under the age of five years who is placed with the scholarship recipient for the purposes of adoption, other than a child or step-child of the recipient or of the recipient’s spouse or a child who has previously lived continuously with the recipient for a period of six months or more.

(90) If the recipient is the primary carer of a child, the recipient is entitled to a maximum of 60 working days paid parental leave during the scholarship.

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(91) If the recipient is the partner of the primary carer for a child, the recipient is entitled to a maximum of ten working days parental leave during the scholarship.

(92) If the recipient is the primary carer of a child, parental leave must commence:

a. in the period commencing no earlier than six weeks before the birth or adoption of the child; and
b. no later than the birth or adoption of the child.

(93) The application must include:

a. a medical certificate or an appropriate document containing proof of birth or adoption; and
b. the endorsement of the recipient's Principal Advisor.

(94) If the recipient is the partner of the primary carer, the application must include:

a. a certificate from a registered medical practitioner which names their partner, states that she is pregnant and the anticipated date of birth, or states the date on which the birth took place; and
b. the endorsement of the recipient's Principal Advisor.

(95) Scholarship recipients who have exhausted their paid parental leave allocation are able to apply for an unpaid interruption to candidature for each instance of parental leave.

(96) If the recipient is the primary carer of an additional child during the term of scholarship and has exhausted the initial paid parental leave of 60 working days, a second period of parental leave to the equivalent of 60 working days paid leave from non-RTP funding may be requested.

Change of HDR Program

(97) Unless otherwise prescribed in the scholarship rules, the recipient of a scholarship may change between the MPhil and PhD programs while holding the scholarship.

(98) If an application to change programs is approved, the maximum duration of the recipient's scholarship is reset to that of the new program as prescribed in clauses 25 and 27.

(99) The recipient's previous period holding the scholarship counts against the maximum duration determined by above clause 98.

Change of HDR Project

(100) If a recipient changes their research project and remains with the same enrolling AOU and HDR advisor(s), the scholarship will continue without change.

(101) If a recipient transfers their enrolment to a different enrolling AOU or HDR advisor, the scholarship will continue without change if:

a. The new enrolling AOU support the scholarship under the same terms and conditions.
b. The new HDR advisor(s) support the scholarship under the same terms and conditions.
c. The scholarship provider approves the change of HDR project.

Transfer and Termination of Scholarship

(102) A scholarship awarded by UQ is not transferable to another institution, except in the case of the Research Training Program scholarships.

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(103) The scholarship will be terminated prior to its expiry date in the following circumstances:

a. A recipient is in breach of this policy, procedure and guideline or any other condition of the scholarship, as outlined in the letter of offer;
b. The recipient's HDR candidature is withdrawn or terminated;
c. The recipient relinquishes the scholarship or withdraws from candidature;
d. The recipient ceases to be enrolled full-time in the HDR program and has not obtained approval to hold the scholarship while enrolled part-time;
e. The recipient fails to resume study at the conclusion of a period of scholarship leave and has not obtained approval to extend that leave;
f. A candidate, who is not required to undertake an oral examination component, submits their thesis for examination to UQ;
g. A candidate, who is required to undertake an oral examination component, upon completion of the oral examination as approved by the Dean, Graduate School, if the stipend is still active;
h. The recipient fails to make satisfactory progress within the progress review process;
i. The recipient has provided incorrect or inaccurate information associated with the scholarship nomination;
j. The recipient is successful for a UQ Graduate School living allowance stipend while holding another UQ research living allowance stipend. In this instance the original living allowance stipend may be reduced to a top up at the discretion of the scholarship provider;
k. The recipient transfers their enrolment to a different enrolling AOU or HDR advisor(s).

(104) Scholarship stipend payments cease from the date of termination of the scholarship.

(105) The Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) and International Postgraduate Research Scholarship (IPRS) funded by the Commonwealth of Australia have been withdrawn from 1 January 2017. Holders of these scholarships will be transferred to the Australian Government RTP Scholarship (APA) and Australian Government RTP Tuition Fee Offset (IPRS) under the terms and conditions outlined in this Procedure from 1 January 2017.

Supervision and Facilities

(106) The policy and procedures for minimum expectations of UQ in relation to HDR training can be found in the Higher Degree by Research Candidature Charter Policy and Higher Degree by Research Candidature Charter Procedure.

(107) The policy and procedures for supervisory practice is included in the Eligibility and Role of Higher Degree by Research Advisors Policy and the Eligibility and Role of Higher Degree by Research Advisors Procedure.

Enrichment Activities

(108) All HDR candidates will have access to the Career Development Framework (CDF) the details of which are available at the Graduate School Career Development Framework - Online Resources website.

(109) The policy and procedures that describe research training, including coursework and structured learning can be found in Research Training Policy and Research Training Procedure.

Australian Income Tax Exempt Status

(110) The Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (ITAA 1997) specifies that income received by way of a research scholarship is exempt from Australian income tax if the following conditions are met:

a. the recipient is enrolled full-time in a HDR program;

b. the scholarship is provided principally for educational purposes (that is, for the giving or imparting of instruction to the recipient);
c. the scholarship is not provided on the condition that the recipient becomes or remains an employee of the scholarship provider; and
d. the scholarship is not provided on the condition that the recipient undertakes to render services (such as labour) to the scholarship provider.

Feedback on Decisions

(111) If requested, the Chair of the Scholarship Selection Committee shall provide feedback on the scholarship nominee's rank and final score on the HDR Scholarship Selection Criteria Matrix and any key factors that might have caused the Committee to consider the applicant less competitive than others. The Chair is not able to disclose confidential information about other nominees within the pool of applicants considered.

(112) UQ does not have an appeal process against the decisions made by a duly constituted selection committee concerning the selection and award of scholarship recipients. The Scholarship Selection Committee has discretion in the relative weighting of selection criteria, the judgement on the merits of applicants against those criteria and in the assessment of potential or ability to undertake an HDR program at UQ.

(113) Any concerns about the scholarship selection process should be referred in the first instance to the Chair of the selection committee.

(114) The Student Grievance Resolution Policy sets out the grievance resolution process to be followed for all matters relating to admission to the HDR programs. Formal grievances and appeals by HDR applicants regarding decisions made during selection for admission therefore follow the processes outlined in Student Grievance Resolution Policy and Academic Administrative Appeals by Students Policy.

Section 4 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Dean, Graduate School

(115) The Dean, Graduate School (or their delegate) decides on the offer of admission and scholarship for HDR candidates at UQ.

Director, Graduate School

(116) The Director, Graduate School is responsible for effective and robust processes enabling the management of research scholarships at UQ.

Head of AOU

(117) The Head of the enrolling AOU (Head of School, Institute Director, or equivalent) who has responsibility for AOU resourcing, approves cohort level course requirements if required.

Director of HDR

(118) The Director of HDR endorses HDR program matters on behalf of the enrolling AOU, including determining if an applicant's project aligns with the AOU's research, has adequate resourcing and supervision, and endorses the scholarship application on behalf of the AOU.

Principal Advisors

(119) The detailed academic role, accountabilities and eligibility for Principal Advisors are specified in the Eligibility and Role of Higher Degree by Research Advisors Policy.

Advisors

(120) The detailed academic role, accountabilities and eligibility for advisors are specified in the Eligibility and Role of Higher Degree by Research Advisors Policy.

Section 5 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(121) Review of, and compliance with, this Procedure is overseen by the Dean, Graduate School and the Academic Board's Higher Degree by Research Committee.

Section 6 - Recording and Reporting

(122) All scholarship transactions and activities are recorded within the appropriate UQ system.

(123) All student records including applications, offers, acceptances, and UQ decisions are filed in the student's personal record in UQ's digital student record system.

Section 7 - Definitions, Terms and Acronyms

Terms	Definitions
Advisor	Suitably qualified person who provides expertise related to the candidate's research and is available to provide advice throughout candidature.
COI	Conflict of Interest declared so that a thesis may be assessed free from bias or preferential treatment (see HDR Examinations Guidelines).
Dean	Dean of the UQ Graduate School or delegate.
Director of HDR	An experienced academic member of staff and HDR Supervisor appointed by the Head of the AOU, in conjunction with the Dean, Graduate School, to act as delegate of the Head of AOU for HDR candidate matters.
Enrolling AOU	An Academic Organisational Unit that directly enrols HDR candidates.
HDR	Higher Degree by Research comprising MPhil, PhD and PDR.
PDR	Professional Doctorate by Research.
Principal Advisor	Approved UQ staff member who takes primary academic responsibility for the candidate during their candidature.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	23rd October 2024
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Approval Authority	Dean, Graduate School
Approval Date	23rd October 2024
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Policy Owner	Virginia Slaughter Dean, Graduate School
Enquiries Contact	Graduate School

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