



Australian
National
University

Optus PhD Scholarship for Optical Communications (#1)

CONDITIONS OF AWARD

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2025 the ANU Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics ('the School') in the College of Science ('the College') may offer an award known as the Optus PhD Scholarship for Optical Communications (#1) ('the Award').

Funding for this scholarship is provided by Optus as part of the Innovative Launch, Automation, Novel Materials, Communications, and Hypersonics Hub (iLAUNCH) Next Generation Satellite Communication project in partnership with ANU. The PhD candidate will contribute to the projects' objectives by researching into laser optical and space communications and their integration into Optus's existing laser optical and satellite communications network.

Optus has been Australia's preeminent satellite provider, launching 10 satellites, operating 13 spacecraft, and providing support to over 100 international space programs. Optus is Australia's most experienced satellite owner and operator with five satellites currently in orbit and \$3 billion invested in the space sector as a commercial operator.

The objective of the Award is to fund an outstanding Australian citizen candidate to enable them to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy program in the research area of laser communications, optical instrumentation, atmospheric turbulence site testing, and adaptive optics, based in the ANU Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics, College of Science.

2. BENEFITS

The value of the Award is stated in the letter of offer. The Award will be paid in fortnightly instalments, unless otherwise stated in the letter of offer.

The Award may contain any or all of the following benefits:

- (a) **Stipend Scholarship:** A recipient may be awarded a stipend scholarship equivalent to, or higher than, the value of the ANU standard [Australian Government Research Training Program \(AGRTP\) stipend scholarship](#). The Award is tax free in Australia; or
- (b) **Supplementary Scholarship:** A recipient may be awarded a supplementary scholarship, with the value as detailed in the letter of offer; and
- (c) **Travel Allowance:** Financial support by reimbursement to travel between Optus' facilities and ANU and to attend relevant workshops and events; and
- (d) **Other benefits:**
 - i. Opportunity to rotate through ground and space engineering teams and be involved in the day-to-day operation of the groups/departments/areas with whom they are working.
 - ii. Mentorship from area leads and technical experts.
 - iii. Opportunity to participate in Optus Satellite enterprise training on satellite networks, operations, and RF engineering.
 - iv. Opportunity to participate in STEM outreach activities through Optus Satellite's 'Space Ambassador' program.

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TEQSA Provider ID: PRV12002 (Australian University) | CRICOS Provider Code: 00120C

- v. Opportunity to connect with Optus's Networks for LGBTQIA+, Women, Young Professionals, Wellbeing and Space Ambassadors.

The recipient is responsible for making payment of all tuition fees by the prescribed date as set out by the University each session. Recipients of the Award are responsible for the costs of books, study materials, accommodation and all other costs of study.

3. DURATION

The duration of the full-time Award will be:

- (a) For 3.5 years for the PhD scholarship; less
 - i. periods of enrolment already undertaken for the PhD degree; and/or
 - ii. such shorter period as is stated in the letter of offer.

NB: The scholarship cannot be extended under any circumstances

4. PROGRAM LEAVE

Periods of program leave must be taken in accordance with the *Research Awards Rule*.

(a) Unpaid Program Leave

A recipient may apply for unpaid program leave on personal grounds. If the leave does not exceed a total period of 12 months during the duration of the Award, the recipient may resume the Award at the completion of the leave.

Program leave exceeding a total of 12 months will only be considered where there are exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the recipient and must be approved by the Delegated Authority in the College.

Unpaid program leave is aggregated and awarded only in one-week blocks for a full-time recipient and two-week blocks for a part-time recipient.

A recipient must apply for unpaid program and scholarship leave by completing the relevant section of the Manage my Degree - HDR form in ISIS.

(b) Paid Recreation Leave

A recipient is entitled to a maximum of 20 working days paid recreation leave for each year of the Award. Leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the Award but are forfeited when the Award ceases.

A recipient must apply in writing to their Chair of Panel.

Paid recreation leave does not extend the duration of the Award.

(c) Paid Medical Leave

A recipient is entitled to a maximum of 10 working days paid medical leave for each year of the Award. Leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the Award but are forfeited when the Award ceases.

A recipient must apply in writing to their Chair of Panel.

Paid medical leave does not extend the duration of the Award.

(d) Additional Paid Leave

A recipient is entitled to additional paid medical or carer's leave to a maximum of 60 working days on provision of a medical certificate. Medical certificates must:

- i. be signed by a registered medical practitioner;
- ii. state the likely duration of the required leave; and
- iii. certify that the recipient requires the leave for medical/caring reasons.

Additional paid medical leave is aggregated and awarded only in one-week blocks for a full-time recipients and two-week blocks for a part-time recipients.

A recipient may apply for additional paid medical leave by completing the relevant section of the [Manage my Degree - HDR](#) form in ISIS.

Additional paid leave extends the duration of the Award.

(e) Paid Parental Leave

Recipients who have completed 12 months of their Award and are the primary caregiver of a new child (by birth or legal adoption) are entitled to a maximum of 60 working days paid parental leave.

HDR candidates whose partner gives birth, who have completed 12 months of their scholarship, are entitled to 60 working days leave if the candidate is the primary carer of the child in the first year of the child's life. HDR candidates who access partner leave will only be eligible for 55 working days parental leave.

These provisions also apply if the HDR candidate is the legal parent and primary caregiver of an adopted child:

- i. less than five years of age;
- ii. not a step child of the student; and
- iii. has not previously lived continuously with the student for six months or more.

Paid parental leave is aggregated and awarded only in one-week blocks for a full-time recipients and two-week blocks for a part-time recipient.

Recipients may apply for paid parental leave by completing the relevant section of the [Manage my Degree - HDR](#) form in ISIS.

Paid parental leave extends the period of duration of the Award.

(f) Paid Partner Parental Leave

Recipients who have completed 12 months of their Award and who are the partner of a person who is the primary caregiver of a new child¹ (by birth or legal adoption) may be entitled to five days paid partner parental leave. The University may require the recipient to provide evidence of the date of birth or adoption.

Paid partner parental leave is aggregated and awarded only in one-week blocks for a full-time recipients and two-week blocks for a part-time recipient.

Recipients may apply for paid partner parental leave by completing the relevant section of the [Manage my Degree - HDR](#) form in ISIS.

Paid partner parental leave extends the duration of the Award.

5. ELIGIBILITY

The Award is available to a prospective ANU student who:

- (a) will be enrolling full-time in a program of study for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, based in the Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics, College of Science;
- (b) has completed qualifications comparable to the educational level of an Australian Bachelor first class Honours degree, or has demonstrated research experience to a standard equivalent to an ANU first class Honours;
- (c) has basic programming skills, experience in physics, engineering, astronomical instrumentation, or related fields;

¹ A new child is a child who is less than five years of age, not a step-child of the student and has not previously lived continuously with the student for six months or more

- (d) preferably has experience with signal processing, telecoms, IP networking, RF engineering and/or software defined radios, optical design, optical instrumentation, telescope and observatory operations;
- (e) has excellent communication skills and a demonstrated ability to interact effectively and foster respectful and productive working relationships with colleagues, team/group members, and collaborators; and
- (f) is an Australian Citizen and is willing to undergo the process of obtaining a Security Clearance issued by the Australia Government Security Vetting Agency.

Candidates in receipt of the supplementary scholarship only must also:

- (a) be in receipt of an AG RTP or equivalent stipend scholarship.

This scholarship will be awarded with consideration towards gender diversity.

Research must be undertaken in the year the Award is granted.

6. SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

No application for the Award is required as eligible students who have indicated their interest will be automatically considered.

7. SELECTION

Selection is made on the basis of:

- (a) academic merit, referee reports and other evidence; and
- (b) effective use of funds; and
- (c) demonstrated intention to meet the Objective/s; and
- (d) discipline research interests.

The selection committee will be chaired by Francis Bennet (ANU) and co-chaired by the Satellite Policy & Industry Engagement Manager (Optus Space and Satellite) and the Satellite Defence Security Manager (Optus Space and Satellite). The selection committee reserves the right to make no award if it considers there is no applicant of sufficient merit. The selection committee may also vary the number of Awards and/or offer the Award at other times in exceptional circumstances or based on the standard of applications or students (where funds allow).

8. CONCURRENT HOLDING OF AWARDS

A recipient is permitted to hold other scholarships, awards, grants and bursaries concurrently with this Award, provided the terms of the other scholarship permits this also.

9. DEFERMENT

The Award must be taken up no later than the date specified in the letter of offer, unless otherwise approved.

10. ONGOING ELIGIBILITY

The successful applicants will agree:

- (a) To acknowledge Optus on research outputs during the receipt of the award;
- (b) Undertake regular meetings (at least once per month) with the Optus project lead for development of proposal and ongoing feedback;
- (c) To spend at least 2 years of the candidature at Optus' Belrose (NSW) facility;

- (d) To contribute to the education activities at the School (teaching and/or tutoring in relevant courses), to meet all Candidature progression indicators and to take part in (in person) School significant events, and to contribute to on- and off-site activities at Optus' Belrose facility, such as school tours, STEM outreach events and weekly team meetings; and
- (e) To remain enrolled full-time in a program of study for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Australian National University in the program for which the Award is offered.

A part-time Award may be offered or approved if the recipient has reasons acceptable to the University which preclude full-time study for part or all of the program of study. In such cases the University must be satisfied that the reasons relate to caring commitments, a medical condition, a disability or other circumstance which limits the recipient's capacity to undertake full-time study.

11. SUSPENSION OF AWARD

A recipient may apply to the College for suspension of their Award. A suspension may be appropriate if a recipient is studying at another institution and receives an award for that study. In these circumstances the duration of the Award will be reduced by the periods of study undertaken towards the degree during suspension of the Award (unless the study was undertaken overseas as part of a Commonwealth Government financially supported international postgraduate research scholarship or award).

The University may suspend the Award where a recipient has:

- (a) outstanding fees; or
- (b) an outstanding debt with the University; or
- (c) outstanding HDR program milestone/s; or
- (d) been found to be in breach of a statute, rule or policy or procedure of the University.

The Award will be suspended when at least five working days have passed since the University advised the recipient in writing that the milestones, debt and/or fees are outstanding, until the milestones have been met or the outstanding fees and/or debt have been paid. Under these circumstances, the recipient will forfeit payment of the Award for the period of time that their Award is suspended.

12. CESSATION OF AWARD

The Award ceases or should be surrendered:

- (a) if a student no longer meets the eligibility requirements;
- (b) at the conclusion of the period outlined in section 3;
- (c) on the date on which the recipient withdraws or ceases to attend the University other than for approved absences;
- (d) if a recipient fails to enrol as required in section 5;
- (e) if a recipient changes their program or course without permission to retain the Award;
- (f) if a recipient breaches academic or behavioural standards set by the University under the *Discipline Rule (2021)* and *Academic Integrity Rule (2021)*;

whichever is earliest.

13. REPAYMENT OF FUNDS

A recipient who is taking leave from their program, or changing their enrolment intensity from full-time to part-time, must submit the prescribed [Manage My Degree - HDR](#) form in a

timely manner and, where possible in advance, in order to avoid receiving an overpayment of their Award. In circumstances where an overpayment does occur, these will be recovered in accordance with the ANU Procedure - Overpayments.

14. PROVIDING FALSE OR MISLEADING INFORMATION

The Award is based on the information provided to the University. The Award may be withdrawn at any stage if incorrect, false or misleading information is provided or relevant information is withheld. This includes circumstances where the false information is unrelated to the assessment for the Award.

15. VARIATION TO CONDITIONS OF AWARD

In exceptional circumstances and on a case-by-case basis, section 7 of these Conditions of Award may be varied by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Research) on the recommendation of the chair of the selection committee.

16. TAXATION & CENTRELINK

Recipients are responsible for seeking taxation and Centrelink advice (if applicable) regarding their own individual circumstances. Awards may be regarded as taxable income if a recipient is enrolled on a part-time basis.

For information on how the Award may affect Centrelink benefits, see this website <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/income/>

17. ACCOMMODATION

It is the recipient's responsibility to obtain residential accommodation. Information on student accommodation and application forms are available from the University Accommodation Services. Information may be found on the Web at: <http://www.anu.edu.au/study/accommodation>

18. PUBLICITY

The recipient may be requested to participate in publicity for the Award from time to time. This may include publicity in the country of residence or of schooling. Recipients may be contacted for an interview and photograph. The University may also publicise the Award by publishing the names of the recipients. Arrangements for such publicity will be made through the Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics or ANU Communications and Engagement (ACE).

Recipients will also be required to acknowledge funding from the Award should the outcomes lead to publication.

19. DISCLOSURE AND DONOR CONTACT

For the purposes of reporting on the impact of awards, the name, program name and demographics (for example: age, country or town of residence) relating to a recipient of the Award may be disclosed to donors supporting the Award. This will not include recipient contact details. The recipient may be asked to write a personal note of thanks or to meet with donors. Any contact between a donor and a recipient will be facilitated by the ANU Advancement Office or an authorised representative of the University.

20. CONTACT WITH THE AWARD OWNER

All enquiries regarding the Award and changes, issues, or further information after acceptance should be made to:

*Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics
College of Science*

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Francis Bennet <francis.bennet@anu.edu.au>

21. DISCLAIMER

The recipient of the Award is subject to *The Australian National University Act 1991* as amended, and to the Statutes, Rules, Regulations and Resolutions of the University.

The Award does not carry any commitment by the University for future employment.

These Conditions of Award should be read in conjunction with the *Research Awards Rule 2021* and Higher Degree Research Policy and Procedures available from the [ANU website](#).

22. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & RULES

HDR Legislation, policies and procedures - <https://www.anu.edu.au/students/program-administration/assessments-exams/hdr-policies-procedures>

HDR Scholarships Policy - https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_7926387

HDR Scholarships Procedure - https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_7926390

ANU Academic Integrity Rule - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2021L00997>

ANU Discipline Rule - <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2021L00998>

ANU Student Code of Conduct <https://www.anu.edu.au/students/program-administration/program-management/student-code-of-conduct>