

# **PROJECT-BASED POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STIPEND SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION GUIDE**

**Blockchain-Enhanced Federated Learning for Secure Edge Computing**

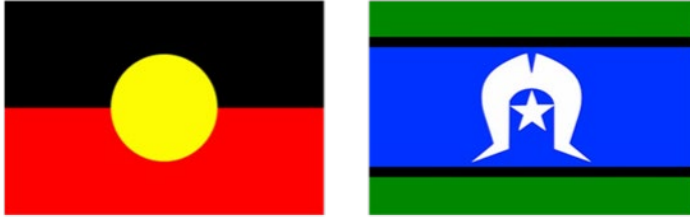
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY ONLY

Newly commencing Australian residents (all domestic students including Australian citizens, Australian permanent residents, New Zealand citizens and holders of a permanent Australian humanitarian visa)

Newly commencing International applicants

19/03/2025  
Version 1.0

# Acknowledgement of Country



Victoria University acknowledges, recognises and respects the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are the traditional owners of University land in Victoria, the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation who are the traditional owners of University land in Sydney, and the Yulara/Yugarapul people and Turrbal people living in Meanjin (Brisbane).

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## Key Details

This guide is for applicants interested in a postgraduate research scholarship commencing in **Research Period 2 2025** or **Research Period 1 2026** at Victoria University.

This scholarship is for the purpose of undertaking a graduate research degree related to the project outlined in [Table 2](#).

The Stipend Value and Included Benefits are outlined in [Table 3](#).

### The Project:

This project aims to address the pressing requirement to secure edge computing applications across diverse sectors such as healthcare, transportation, and manufacturing, which are gaining significance in Australia and worldwide. This project expects to generate new knowledge in federated learning by combining blockchain and graph modelling technologies, aligning with national cybersecurity priorities and contributing to a safer digital environment for individuals, businesses, and critical infrastructure. Expected outcomes include improved edge computing performance, privacy preservation, and attack resistance for both internal and external threats, benefiting the Australian community and supporting the nation's digital transformation.

Applicants should possess the following required disciplinary knowledge:

- ◆ A background in deep learning, graph modelling and analytics, cybersecurity, edge computing, federated learning or blockchain technologies

### Application due date

a. Application Due Date	Open until filled
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### Project Outline

Item	Detail
a. Expected Commencement Date	28 July 2025 or mid-February 2026
b. Project Title	Blockchain-Enhanced Federated Learning for Secure Edge Computing
c. Funding Agency	ARC DECRA
d. Funding Agency ID	DE250100211
e. Chief Investigator	Professor Hua Wang
f. Associate Supervisor	Dr Jiao Yin
g. Special Conditions	Intellectual Property Assignment Required      No

Working with Children Check Required	No
Police Check Required	No
Other conditions	Not Applicable

### Stipend Value and Included Benefits

Item	Detail
a. Value of stipend per annum	\$35,006 (2025 rate)
b. Fixed rate or incremented	Incremented
c. Fee offset included	Fee Offset Included
d. PhD and/or Master Research Degrees available	PhD only
e. Part-Time Available	No
f. Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)	OSHC Included - Single

## Domestic Applicants

### Eligibility

To be eligible for this scholarship, applicants must:

- Be Australian residents (all domestic students including Australian citizens, Australian permanent residents, New Zealand citizens and holders of permanent Australian humanitarian visas)
- Meet the minimum academic entry and English language requirements for admission to the degree - click [here](#) for further details
- Not already have completed a research degree at the same or higher Australian Quality Framework (AQF) (or equivalent for overseas institutions)

### Domestic Conditions and Benefits

Successful applicants will receive a full guide to the conditions and benefits of the Scholarships at the time of offer. The following is a summary of the main benefits and conditions.

### Scholarship Value

#### Stipend Value

The annual value of the stipend is provided in Item (a) Value of Stipend per Annum in [Table 3 Stipend Value and Included Benefits](#) and are currently exempt from taxation.

If Item (b) of [Table 3: Stipend Value and Included Benefits](#) is marked as “Incremented” then stipend payments are indexed annually.

## Fee Offset Value

In 2025, the value of this the Fee Offset component of a Scholarship is \$13,650 - \$16,750 per research period depending on the course.

## Additional awards, allowances and stipends

Holders of Scholarships may:

- Be in receipt of minor award, allowances or other earnings which are supplementary to a scholarship, or derived from part- time work within the policies of Victoria University
  - a. student must not be receiving income from another source to support that student's general living costs while undertaking their course of study if that income is greater than 75 percent of that students VU HDR or RTP Stipend rate;
  - b. income unrelated to the course of study or income received for the student's course of study but not for the purposes of supporting general living costs is not to be taken into account.

## Period of Support

All candidates are expected to complete their study in the timely duration for their degree as per [Table 4](#).

### Stipend durations for full-time Higher Degrees by Research

Degree	Timely Duration	Maximum Stipend Duration
Doctor of Philosophy	4 years	3.5 years

Periods of study already undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the award will be deducted from the normal period of award tenure. Similarly, periods of study undertaken during suspension of the award, or undertaken during the tenure of a previous Research Training Program Stipend or Australian Postgraduate Award, will be deducted from the maximum period of tenure.

A Scholarship holder may be required to pay tuition fees for any period of enrolment in excess of the timely duration.

## Special Conditions

If item (g) in [Table 2](#) includes:

- the response “Yes” to the item “Intellectual Property Assignment Required” then the scholarship holder will be required to assign intellectual property they create while working on this Project (excluding copyright in the thesis) to the University through a formal agreement; or
- the response “Yes” to the item “Working Children Check Required” then the scholarship holder will be required to secure a Working with Children Check before commencing the Project and Scholarship; or

- the Response “Yes” to the item Police Check Required, then the scholarship holder will be required to secure a Police Check before commencing Project and Scholarship; or
- Other Special Conditions, then the Other Special Conditions must be met and abided by the scholarship holder throughout the Project.

## Employment

Stipend candidates are expected to normally study and research full-time (minimum of 36.75 hours per week) between the hours of 8.00am – 6.00pm Monday to Friday with Stipend candidates limited to a maximum of eight (8) hours paid employment per week during these hours. Please refer to the [Higher Degree by Research Scholarship Procedure](#).

Employment must not interfere with the candidate’s progress.

## Commencement

No deferrals of the Scholarship will be considered. All successful applicants are expected to commence study by the Commencement Date advised in the Letter of Offer. The Commencement Date will normally be the Expected Commencement Date in Item (a) of [Table 2 Project Outline](#), however the University reserves the right to change the Commencement Date in the Letter of Offer when offering a scholarship.

If an applicant cannot start by the Commencement Date, the offer of the Scholarship may be withdrawn.

## Part-time Scholarships

If Item (f) of Stipend Value and Included Benefits is marked “No” then Funding Agency requirements for the Project mean that the scholarship cannot be offered for part-time study.

If Item (f) of Stipend Value and Included Benefits is marked “Yes” the Scholarship may be available for part-time study to those who are unable to study full-time for all or part of their candidature. Where Item (f) of Stipend Value and Included Benefits is marked “yes” part-time scholarships can only be approved only in the following specific instances, where the scholarship holder has:

- A medical condition which limits the capacity to undertake full-time study (supported by medical certification), OR
- Care responsibilities for a pre-school child, OR
- Care responsibilities for a school aged child as a sole parent with limited access to support, OR
- Care responsibilities for an invalid or disabled spouse, child or parent

Part-time scholarships are **NOT** available to applicants who wish to study part-time in order to undertake full or part-time employment. Part-time scholarship holders are subject to the same restrictions on employment as full-time scholarship holders. Applicants wishing to be considered for a part-time scholarship must meet the criteria listed above. Applicants must provide evidence of the reason(s) they are unable to study full time. They also require the agreement of the supervisor and the University to the part-time arrangements.

# International Applicants

## Eligibility

To be eligible an International applicant must:

- Be a citizen of any country other than Australia or New Zealand.
- Meet the University's academic entrance requirements for enrolment into a research degree - see [website](#) for further details.
- Meet the University's English language proficiency requirements for enrolment in a research degree. Click [here](#) for further details.
- Enrol onshore (in person) as a full-time student.

You are **NOT ELIGIBLE** for if you:

- Have previously held an IPRS, VUIPRS or OPRS (unless it was for a Masters by Research degree, and you are applying for a scholarship to undertake PhD studies).
- Are currently studying, or have recently studied, on an AIDAB or AUSAID scholarship and are applying for an IPRS immediately following the AIDAB/AUSAID funded studies.

Priority will be given to:

- Applicants without an equivalent level degree.

## International Conditions and Benefits

Successful applicants will receive a full guide to the conditions and benefits of the Scholarship at the time of offer. The following is a summary of the main benefits and conditions.

### Scholarship Value

#### Stipend Value

The annual value of the stipend is provided in Item (a) Value of Stipend per Annum in **Table 3. Stipend Value and Included Benefits**. If Item (b) of **Table 3. Stipend Value and Included Benefits** is marked as "Incremented" then stipend payments are indexed annually and are currently exempt from taxation.

#### Tuition Fee Waiver

If Item (c) of **Table 3. Stipend Value and Included Benefits** is marked "Fee Offset" or "RTP Fee Offset" then international award holders will be granted a fee offset or Research Training Program fee-offset scholarship respectively, covering tuition fees for the duration of the course. In 2025, the value of this component of the Award is between A\$17,100 and A\$20,200 per semester.

#### Overseas Health Cover

If Item (d) of **Table 3. Stipend Value and Included Benefits** is marked "OSHC Included – Single" then International award holders of this project scholarship will be granted Overseas



Student Health Cover (OSHC) for maximum duration of the degree in which they are enrolled and an additional two month of health cover.

If Item (d) of **Table 3. Stipend Value and Included Benefits** is marked “OSHC – Not Included” then International award holders of this project scholarship will need to fund their own Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC).

### Excluded Costs

The following costs are NOT included:

- travel costs
- the cost of English language testing
- the cost of bridging programs or English language programs

### Period of Support

All students are expected to complete their study in the timely duration for their degree per Table 5.

#### Stipend durations for Higher Degrees by Research at Victoria University

	Stipend Duration	Timely Duration
Doctor of Philosophy	3.5 years	4 years

Periods of study already undertaken towards the degree prior to the commencement of the award will be deducted from the normal period of award tenure.

A Scholarship holder may be required to pay tuition fees for any period of enrolment in excess of the timely duration.

### Special Conditions

If item (f) of **Table 2. Stipend Value and Included Benefits** includes:

- the response “Yes” to the item “Intellectual Property Assignment Required” then the scholarship holder will be required to assign intellectual property they create while working on this project (excluding copyright in the thesis) to the University through a formal agreement; or
- the response “Yes” to the item “Working Children Check Required” then the scholarship holder will be required to secure a Working with Children Check before commencing the Project and Scholarship; or
- the Response “Yes” to the item Police Check Required, then the scholarship holder will be required to secure a Police Check before commencing Project and Scholarship; or
- Other Special Conditions, then the Other Special Conditions must be met and abided by the scholarship holder throughout the Project.

## Employment

Stipend candidates are expected to normally study and research full-time (minimum of 36.75 hours per week) between the hours of 8.00am – 6.00pm Monday to Friday with Stipend candidates limited to a maximum of eight (8) hours paid employment per week during these hours. Please refer to the [Higher Degree by Research Scholarship Procedure](#). Employment must not interfere with the candidate's progress.

## Commencement

No deferrals of the Scholarship will be considered. All successful applicants are expected to commence study by the Commencement Date advised in the Letter of Offer. The Commencement Date will normally be the Expected Commencement Date in Item a of **Table 2. Project Outline** (see above), however the University reserves the right to change the Commencement Date in the Letter of Offer when offering a scholarship.

If an applicant cannot start by the Commencement Date, the offer of the Scholarship may be withdrawn.

## Part-time Scholarships

International award holders are not permitted to study part time.

# Scholarship Selection Procedures

## Eligibility

All applications are assessed against the Eligibility criteria for the scholarship scheme. Those applications deemed ineligible for a scholarship will not be processed any further and ineligible applicants will be notified of the result.

## Ranking against the selection criteria

The Project Supervisor will rank eligible applications on the basis of academic merit, relevant research experience, publications, and relevant work experience and may identify applications which are not for further consideration (NFFC).

The Project Supervisor may contact an applicant directly for more detail regarding their application.

## Final Ranking

The Institute Associate Director will determine a final ranking of applications, identifying the preferred application.

## Appeals

A request to review a scholarship decision must be lodged in writing [dean.gradresearch@vu.edu.au](mailto:dean.gradresearch@vu.edu.au) within 10 University business days of the applicant being informed of the decision.

A review of a scholarship decision is available in circumstances where unsuccessful applicants believe there was a breach of process in the handling of their application;

The Dean, Graduate Research will undertake, or arrange a review if there is a conflict of interest, of the decision and a written outcome will be provided within 10 University business days of the date that the request was received by VU. If there are any delays to the timeline for any outcome, the Dean, Graduate Research will advise the applicant the reason for the delay and the date that they may receive an outcome of the review.

## Application Submission

How to Apply:

1. Contact Dr Jiao Yin, [Jiao.Yin@vu.edu.au](mailto:Jiao.Yin@vu.edu.au) to express your interest and discuss your suitability for the project
2. Include the following documents:
  - a. Academic transcripts
  - b. Qualification certificates
  - c. An up-to-date CV
  - d. A short statement on your interest, background knowledge and suitability for the project
3. The preferred applicant/s will then be advised on the application process

## For more information

Please contact: Dr Jiao Yin, [Jiao.Yin@vu.edu.au](mailto:Jiao.Yin@vu.edu.au)