

**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

PROJECT-BASED GRADUATE RESEARCH STIPEND SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION GUIDE

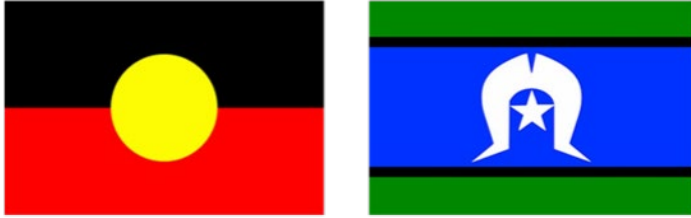
**Tracking dementia resilience using novel biomarkers of
exercise neuroprotection**

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)

24/09/2025
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 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](#).

Project:

Regular exercise is one of the few interventions that has been demonstrated to reduce all-cause dementia risk, but we still don't understand the complex mechanisms by which it protects the brain.

Utilising a unique combination of cutting-edge neuroimaging (high-field magnetic resonance imaging) and molecular biology (small-RNA sequencing of extracellular vesicles) techniques, this project aims to better understand the neurobiological mechanisms of exercise neuroprotection.

The goal of this project is to uncover novel biomarkers of exercise-derived neuroprotection, with the goal of identifying and validating a blood-based surrogate marker of brain health. This will aid in the development of a rapid, low-cost, and accessible blood test to monitor the therapeutic effectiveness of exercise to improve brain health and reduce dementia risk.

Applicants should possess the following **desired disciplinary knowledge**:

Experience with

- rodent handling (e.g., delivering an exercise intervention, tissue harvesting),
- molecular biology techniques (e.g., extracellular vesicle isolation, RNA extraction), and/or
- handling large data sets (e.g., omics, MRI)

Application due date

a. Application Due Date	Open until filled
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Table 2: Project Outline

Item	Detail
a. Expected Commencement Date	16 February 2026
b. Project Title	Tracking dementia resilience using novel biomarkers of exercise neuroprotection
c. Chief Investigator	Dr James Broatch
d. Associate Supervisor	Professor Andy Hill

e. Special Conditions	Intellectual Property Assignment Required	Yes
	Working with Children Check Required	No
	Police Check Required	No
	Other conditions	Not applicable

Table 3: Stipend Value and Included Benefits

Item	Detail
a. Value of stipend per annum	\$35,707 (2026 rate)
b. Fixed rate or incremented	Incremented rate
c. Fee offset included	Fee Offset Included
d. Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)	NA
e. PhD and/or Master Research Degrees available	PhD only
f. Part-Time Available	Yes

Domestic Applicants

Eligibility

To be eligible for this scholarship, applicants must:

- 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 2026, the value of this the Fee Offset component of a Scholarship is \$14,000 to \$16,750 per Research Period depending on the area of research.

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.

Period of Support

All candidates are expected to complete their study in the timely duration for their degree as per **Table 4**.

Table 4: Stipend durations for full-time Higher Degrees by Research

	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. 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.

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.

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, relevant work experience, referee reports 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 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

Expressions of interest should be submitted to [Dr James Broatch](#), with the following documentation attached:

- 500-word research proposal
- Academic transcripts
- Qualification certificates
- [200-word personal statement](#) – include your reasons for wanting to undertake this research, and your academic path or trajectory
- Up-to-date CV

Successful applicants will be required to submit a formal application through the Victoria University Admissions portal and meet all University requirements for admission and enrolment.

For more information

Please contact: Dr James Broatch, James.Broatch@vu.edu.au, +61 399 196 283

PRIVACY STATEMENT

Victoria University (VU) values your privacy and is committed to handling your personal information in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) and other applicable privacy legislation. The personal information collected on this form will be used primarily for the purposes of assessing and processing this application. VU may also use and disclose your personal information to verify the information provided by you, to comply with government and other reporting requirements and/or to carry out associated activities connected with this application. Your personal information may also be disclosed to Commonwealth and State agencies such as the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Home Affairs in accordance with VU's obligations under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth) (**ESOS Act**), the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (**National Code**) and other applicable legislation. Your personal information will not otherwise be used or disclosed without your consent, unless permitted by law. By completing and submitting this application, you agree to VU collecting, using and disclosing your personal information as described above and in accordance with VU's Privacy Policy and Student Information Privacy Collection Statement (which provides further detail about the types of personal information VU may collect from you and how it is managed) available on the Privacy page on our website vu.edu.au/privacy

You have a right to access your personal information held by VU. If you have any questions regarding privacy, please refer to the Privacy page on our website, our frequently asked questions at ASKVU or phone us on 9919 6100 or 1300 VIC UNI (or 1300 842 864).

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