



2026 Sir Roland Wilson Scholarship

Information Pack

The Sir Roland Wilson PhD Scholarship ('the scholarship') enhances the capability of the Australian Public Service (APS) by developing strong leaders through high quality research and skills training, building on the legacy of Sir Roland Wilson.

Offered at The Australian National University (ANU), the scholarship supports high performing APS employees to complete PhD research on topics of national and global significance and relevance to the Australian Public Service (APS).

The Foundation awards three-year full-pay PhD scholarships to high performing EL1 and EL2 Australian public servants.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must:

- be a substantive Executive Level 1 or 2 employee
- have at least three years' service in the APS
- have been admitted to a PhD program at ANU, commencing in Semester 1, 2026.

Selection criteria

Selection is based on the outcome of the interview in conjunction with the application form, previous academic record, academic supervisor agreement and APS recommendation and endorsement, and on the basis of:

- the overall merits of the applicant
- a record of high performance within the APS and leadership potential
- a demonstrated commitment to the pursuit of a career in the APS
- academic credentials and a capacity to conduct high quality, sustained research
- identification of an area of research that is of priority public interest, of relevance and enduring interest for the APS.

Scholarship application and selection stages

Stage 1 – ANU PhD application – October 2024-March 2025

Candidates submit a completed application to ANU for admission into a PhD program by 31 March 2025. Once you submit your application, **email the Foundation with your ANU application number.**

If you are already a current ANU student and plan on applying for the scholarship, please inform the Foundation by 31 March 2025 with your ANU student ID number.

Stage 2 – Agency application – April-July 2025

Upon receiving a letter of offer from ANU, candidates submit a completed [Sir Roland Wilson Foundation 2025-26 Scholarship Application Form](#) to their APS agency (contact your agency for exact timeframes). Agencies conduct internal selections.

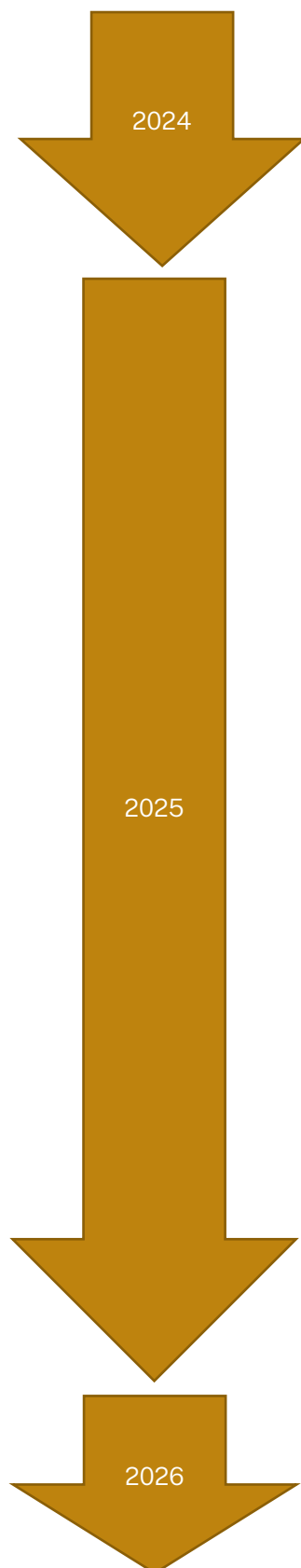
Stage 3 – Foundation shortlisting and interviews – August 2025

Agencies send endorsed nominations to the Foundation by 11 July 2025. The Foundation shortlists candidates for interview in August.

Stage 4 – Outcomes – September 2025

Successful candidates will be offered a scholarship to commence in February 2026.

Application timeline



October – November 2024

- Online information sessions
 - 16 October 2024
 - 12 November 2024
- **Applications open**; Interested candidates to apply for Semester 1 2025.
- Online Higher Degree Research (HDR) proposal writing workshop: 30 October 2024

February 2025

- Online information session
 - 4 February 2025

March

- **31 March**: ANU Applications close.
- Candidates must have submitted their **completed** PhD application to ANU and provided their application number to srw.foundation@anu.edu.au.

NB An application number without a completed application may not be accepted by the Foundation.

April

- Foundation notifies agencies of applications received.

April-July

- Internal agency selection processes.
- **11 July**: Endorsed agency nominations due to the Foundation.

August

- Foundation selection panel shortlists scholarship candidates and interviews take place.

September

- Candidates are notified of the outcomes and complete Acceptance of Scholarship package.

November

- 2026 Scholar Orientation

February (2026)

- Commencement of studies and scholarship program
- 2026 Scholar Commencement Dinner

Stage 1: Apply to ANU

Applying for a PhD program at ANU

You will need to submit your PhD application to the school or college where you want to study. Applications generally take between six to eight weeks to assess.

ANU has [seven academic colleges](#). Refer to each colleges' website for information about how to apply.

Developing a research proposal

You are strongly encouraged to discuss your proposed research project with your APS supervisor, SES and any other relevant APS areas before applying. As part of your proposal, you may have to obtain permission to access and use APS or agency-specific data. The Foundation encourages you to discuss data access with your agency as early as possible.

The quality of your research proposal will be a factor in determining whether you are offered a scholarship. Your research proposal should be viewed as a starting point for your research project. In your first year of candidature, you will develop a refined research proposal through detailed literature reviews, coursework, and supervisory input.

The Foundation is hosting a Higher Degree Research proposal writing workshop with Professor Inger Mewburn on 30 October 2024. For more information and to register, visit srwfoundation.anu.edu.au/events.

You can find initial guidance about writing an ANU research proposal on the [ANU website](#).

Professor Inger Mewburn's blog, [The Thesis Whisperer](#), is also a useful resource.

Research topics

Your research topic should be of national significance and strategic importance or immediate relevance to specific agencies, or the APS more broadly.

You should consult your agency to ensure your proposal is in an area of enduring relevance and strategic priority.

Choosing an ANU academic supervisor

Once you have decided on your research topic, you will need to identify a potential supervisor using the ANU Researcher Database.

Refer to each colleges' website for the best way to contact potential supervisors.

Stage 2: Apply to your agency

Internal selection process

Agencies are responsible for selecting candidates who meet the scholarship criteria. Each agency convenes a Senior Executive Service (SES) selection panel to shortlist candidates.

Agencies consider the following selection criteria when shortlisting applicants:

- the overall merits of the applicant
- a record of high performance within the APS and leadership potential
- a demonstrated commitment to the pursuit of a career in the APS
- academic credentials and a capacity to conduct high quality, sustained research
- identification of an area of research that is of priority public interest, of relevance and enduring interest for the APS.

Stage 3: Foundation shortlisting and interview

Agencies provide endorsed applications to the Foundation for shortlisting. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview with a panel consisting of Foundation Board members, senior APS leaders and academics.

Stage 4: Outcomes

Successful candidates will be offered a scholarship to commence in February the following year. Scholarship recipients will sign a Deed of Agreement with their agency and a Conditions of Award scholarship agreement with the University.

Additional information

Scholarship duration

The duration of a full-time award will be three years in the first instance, less any period of enrolment already undertaken for the PhD degree, or such shorter period as is stated in the letter of offer. Scholars studying a PhD may request an extension of up to 12 months; however, any extensions also need approval from the scholar's agency.

Scholars must work with the Foundation and their agencies to ensure all academic and agency leave is aligned. All non-program time is to reported to your agency as leave, as per expectations outlined in the Deed of Agreement.

Research scholars are permitted 20 days of non-program time (i.e. recreational leave) each year, to be reported to your agency as annual (or other) leave.

Administrative arrangements

Scholars and their agency enter into a Deed of Agreement stipulating the agency's conditions of release for you to participate in the scholarship.

Sir Roland Wilson scholarships are full-pay scholarships. Scholars receive financial support from their agency, paid either as salary (at the scholar's substantive grade) or as an equivalent financial payment. Taxation, superannuation and other employment conditions continue to apply, as per the relevant enterprise agreement. The Australian Public Service Commission provides advice to scholars' agencies regarding the drafting of the Deeds of Agreement.

Scholarships are awarded in accordance with ANU Conditions of Award.

International Travel Fund

Scholars can apply to access the Foundation's International Travel Fund for up to A\$40,000 for overseas travel related to their research, to be used during the scholarship. Scholars must have their overseas component approved by their ANU academic supervisor and the Executive Director of the Foundation before receiving part or all of the funding. The funding can be used for travel expenses, accommodation, and other costs associated with living overseas while continuing their PhD program, in accordance with the [ANU Travel Policy](#).

Professional Development Fund

During the final year of scholarship (i.e. the third year of the PhD, or fourth year if an extension has been approved), or the first year post-completion of the scholarship, scholars can apply to access the Foundation's Professional Development Fund for up to A\$5,000 for professional development activities to assist with successful return to service and maintaining cross-institutional links. Scholars must have approval from the agency and the Executive Director of the Foundation before receiving all or part of the funding.

Data Access Fund

During the first and second years of scholarship, scholars can apply to access the Foundation's Data Access Fund for up to A\$10,000 to partially meet some of the costs which may be associated with accessing data from Australian Government agencies or other approved sources. Scholars must complete a Data Feasibility Assessment and gain approval from their agency and the Executive Director of the Foundation before receiving all or part of the funding.

APS Mentoring program

The Foundation requires agencies to provide scholars with a senior APS mentor from their agency, at least for the duration of their studies. Mentors play a significant role in ensuring scholars' work contributes to the agency and the wider APS. They also help keep scholars connected to their agency during their scholarship and might facilitate access to appropriate development and career advancement opportunities during and after their studies.

Alumni

The Foundation has an active and growing alumni network. The Foundation's Alumni Advisory Group organises events and networking opportunities on behalf of the alumni cohort.

Flexible Arrangements

The Sir Roland Wilson Pat Turner scholarship is for full-time study and research at The Australian National University. Part-time study is not guaranteed but may be considered on a temporary basis in exceptional circumstances. Any changes to your study load need to be approved by the Foundation, your agency and your university.

If you are interested in the scholarship program, but think you may require flexible arrangements, please contact srw.foundation@anu.edu.au to discuss prior to application.

Key Contacts

Sir Roland Wilson Foundation

Senior Program Officer: Meggan Fitzgerald T 02 6125 2505

E srw.foundation@anu.edu.au

W <https://srwfoundation.anu.edu.au/>

Connect on Social Media

Twitter/X: [@SRW_ANU](https://twitter.com/SRW_ANU)

Facebook: [Sir Roland Wilson Foundation](#)

LinkedIn: [The Sir Roland Wilson Foundation](#)

Threads: [@srw_anu](#)

ANU HDR Admissions

E hdr.admissions@anu.edu.au

W [Admissions Pre-candidature](#)

T 02 6125 7166

ANU Research Training

W [HDR Candidates Research Training](#)

ANU Domestic Admissions (coursework)

E domestic.admissions@anu.edu.au

T 02 6125 5595

Australian Public Service Commission

T 02 6202 3933

E srwsp@apsc.gov.au

W [APSC Development](#)