



**THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL**

**Re-entry Scholarships**

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**RE-ENTRY SCHOLARSHIPS**

**Rationale**

As a contribution to reducing the imbalance between the numbers of male and female research scholars, the University has, since 1988, offered Postdoctoral Fellowships for women wishing to resume a research career after a significant break since achievement of their last academic award. Such breaks are typically caused by family obligations (for example, child bearing, child rearing, care of aged relations or substantial disruption through family relocation). The area of proposed research in such Postdoctoral Fellowships must be relevant to work currently being undertaken within the University and preference is given to the national priority areas of science, technology or engineering. The Postdoctoral Fellowships were administered, until 1992, by a Re-entry Fellowships Committee. Due to the postdoctoral re-entry scheme only attracting small numbers of applicants of appointable quality, it was suggested that it be extended to cover re-entrants wishing to enrol in higher degree courses.

**Extension of Re-entry Awards to Graduate Students: a brief history**

In 1991 a Graduate School Working Party on Increasing Women's Participation in Research Degrees was set up to consider "What could be done to improve the participation of women in research higher degrees at the ANU?". It was proposed that by offering Re-entry Scholarships to women it would encourage them to undertake study which would lead ultimately to a research degree. Before any such scholarships could be offered, the University had to approach the Sex Discrimination Commissioner and request exemption under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984. This was granted in September 1992 under Section 44 of the Act for a period of 3 years.

In December 1992 a Re-entry Awards Committee was formed to administer both re-entry scholarships and re-entry fellowships, and the University advertised separately for the first time Graduate School Re-entry Scholarships for Women, tenable for up to one year. The funds were allocated from the re-entry fellowship budget and it was agreed to advertise up to three scholarships for 1993. Applicants were required to show a significant career break from study. The main criterion for awarding these scholarships was the likelihood that the scholarship would contribute to the eventual successful completion of a research degree. The terms of the postdoctoral fellowships and graduate scholarships require that applicants are Australian citizens or permanent residents.

In 1993, three students were offered scholarships to complete Graduate Diplomas, 2 in Arts and 1 in Science. The three 1993 awardees each successfully completed a Graduate Diploma: Margot Reynolds (now Harker) (History) subsequently enrolled for a PhD in RSSS; Jan Clark-Walker (Linguistics) completed her MA in Linguistics in February 1996 and has her thesis under examination; and Maureen Nolan is working as

a Research Assistant in RSBS, with the eventual aims of pursuing a research degree. Each is enthusiastic about the scheme. Margot Reynolds commented: "Obviously I wouldn't be doing a PhD had I not been awarded the Re-entry Scholarship, so you can consider the scheme as a resounding success (so far!) in my case".

In 1993 the Re-entry Awards Committee discussed the possible expansion of the Re-entry Program to include the offer of PhD scholarships to women who satisfactorily completed the re-entry scholarship year or to offer PhD scholarships directly to "re-entering" women. The Committee also considered a composite advertisement covering the different elements of the award scheme. Because of funding constraints, the Committee decided the program could not be fully expanded until at least 1995 but it wished to explore possibilities at that time. It is proposed that in any given year the advertisement should include such elements as seem appropriate at that time and for which funds are available.

In August and September 1993 the University approached the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to extend the program to cover Re-entry PhD Scholarships and Post-doctoral Fellowships for women only as part of its affirmative action program. Ms Sue Walpole, Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner replied in favour:

Given the current low levels of participation of women in post-graduate studies and in senior staff positions, it is to be expected that it will take some time before the effects of this special measure impact upon these levels of participation. Accordingly, it is my view is that it is not appropriate to limit the length of time for which the program is to continue. I would, however, point out that Article 4 of the Convention states that 'these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment had been achieved'.

Extract from letter to Dr R. Spear, Dean of the Graduate School, from the Sue Walpole, Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, 21 September 1993.

In 1994 four scholarships were awarded: 3 Graduate Diplomas ( two in Arts and one in Population Health), and 1 MLitt (Archaeology & Anthropology). Three of the four 1994 awardees have successfully completed their courses, the fourth will finish this year. Sharon Leigh (Graduate Diploma in Population Health) was offered a place in the Master's Program but has decided to postpone the offer for a year and accept a position with the Department of Human Services and Health. Michele McLoughlin (Graduate Diploma in History) is now enrolled in an MLitt (History), Julie Rickwood (Graduate Diploma in Anthropology) is now enrolled in a MA in (Anthropology) and Anne Hodgson (MLitt, Archaeology & Anthropology) will complete her part-time course in May 1996.

In 1995 two scholarships were awarded: 1 Master of Science and 1 Master of Arts. The awardees were Mary Mulvaney (Geography) and Deborah Thawley (Linguistics). They will complete their courses in early 1997.

Finally, in 1996 three scholarships were offered: 1 Master of Science, Ms Jan Bitmead (Science Communication) and, for the first time, 2 PhDs: Ms Fiona Terry took up her scholarship in Political Science & International Relations, RSPAS and Ms Margaret Coaldrake has not yet decided whether to accept.

### Benefits and Costs: a Summary

The overall cost of the eleven Re-entry Scholarships awarded since 1993 is \$178100 and there will be an additional cost of \$46038 if Coaldrake accepts her scholarship. The table below shows the breakdown of costs per student per year.

**Table 1**  
**Re-entry Scholarship Awardees 1993 - 1996:**  
**Current and Projected Costs**

Name	Start date	Term Date	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	TOTAL
Clark-Walker, E	10/3/93	10/12/93	11376							11376
Reynolds, MJ	10/3/93	10/12/93	11376							11376
Nolan, MF	10/3/93	28/2/94	12097	2409						14506
Hodgson, AD	28/2/94	27/2/95		12217	2464					14681
Rickwood, JA	28/2/94	9/12/94		11490						11490
McLoughlin, MA	28/2/94	9/12/94		11490						11490
Leigh, S	28/2/94	9/12/94		11490						11490
Thawley, DJ	27/2/95	26/2/96			12504	2530				15034
Mulvaney, MB	24/3/95	23/3/96			11414	3649				15063
Terry, FI	1/4/96	31/3/99				11369	15364	15364	4123	46220
Bitmead, JC	21/2/96	20/2/97				13018	2356			15374
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>3684</b>	<b>4909</b>	<b>2391</b>	<b>3056</b>	<b>1772</b>	<b>1536</b>	<b>4123</b>	<b>17810</b>
			<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>0</b>

From these twelve awardees 4 have gone on to further study, 2 have said they will return to study, 5 are still to complete their courses, and 1 is still to accept or decline the offer. The Graduate School will be asking for a brief report from each of the scholarship holders on their experience as a re-entry scholar as they near completion of their course.

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