

MGSE Strategic Scholarships 2021

Application and Selection Guidelines

Background and Aims

Selecting and supporting high-quality doctoral candidates from a diversity of backgrounds is a core mission of MSGE. Doctoral candidates (PhD) usually are selected through to major application rounds (one in April, one in October); all eligible applications are scored, reviewed and ranked using University guidelines. The most competitive applicants then are offered a PhD place and, potentially, also a stipend to cover their living expenses. Applicants required support from a prospective MGSE supervisor to be eligible.

Due to the impacts of Covid-19 on graduate research application numbers, among other things, we are now in a position to offer a substantial number (eight or more) of *Melbourne Strategic Scholarships* (MSS) to eligible candidates to commence their full-time doctoral study this year. The purpose of the MSS scheme is 1) to identify and attract high-quality PhD candidates and provide a supportive research environment to them here at MGSE 2) to build supervision capacity among early and mid-career MGSE academics, and 3) to directly involve prospective supervisors in the selection of their doctoral candidates

The selection process for MSS differs from the regular process for awarding scholarships as follows:

1. MSS are awarded, in the first place, to academic and supervision teams from within MGSE who have an established program of research and meet the eligibility criteria such as inclusion of early or mid-career academics (see below).
2. Awarding of MSS to academic/supervision team is on a competitive basis, through a panel of MSGE academics using clear criteria (see below).
3. Successful teams then search for and invite EoIs from candidates for the MSS PHD positions (MERI will assist in advertising and initial screening).
4. Shortlisted applicants are then invited to submit a full application (which will be reviewed and scored by MERI as per University guidelines).
5. Academic/supervision teams then propose their preferred candidate for the MSS role. Proposed candidates will then be offered the MSS provided they meet the eligibility criteria (see below).

Eligibility criteria for MGSE academic/supervisory teams

- Academic teams from all areas of MGSE (academic hubs and research centres) are encouraged to apply. Academic and supervision teams can comprise members coming from various hubs and centres.
- In line with University [policy](#), all nominated supervisors must be registered, research active and not overloaded in terms of graduate research supervision.

- Principal supervisors must also meet the MGSE eligibility requirements (successful supervision of at least one doctorate candidate through to completion) and should have substantial supervision experience and record of successful completion.
- One member of the supervision team (and in all likelihood the secondary supervisor) has to be a MSGE early-career or mid-career academic staff (appointed at Levels A, B or C).
- Please note that MGSE academics can only feature on one MSS application as a primary (experienced) supervisor.

Eligibility criteria for proposed PhD candidates

To be eligible for an MSS, applicants must:

- Meet the standard MSGE PhD prerequisites (as per Handbook) and be committed to studying full time,
- receive a University of Melbourne scholarship score of 80 (H1) equivalent or above,
- submit a research proposal with their application that meets the quality standards of a PhD,
- and work on a research problem or question in line with the teams' research program.

Please do note that due to the current closure of borders due to Covid-19 and Research Training Program (RTP) funding settings we anticipate not to be able to offer any MSS to international applicants.

If no eligible applicant can be found under the MSS scheme the scholarship will revert to the general pool of scholarships awarded through the regular application rounds.

Selection criteria & timeline

The MSGE GR subcommittee will review and rank all EOIs that meet the eligibility criteria and which have been received by the due date (31 March 2021, see below). It is anticipated that EoI outcomes will be communicated by mid-April 2021 (so that advertisement of PhD positions can commence shortly after). The following criteria will inform the ranking of EOIs:

	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Weighting</i>
1	Research program	30%
2	Supervision team	40%
3	Research environment	30%

Estimated timeline:

31 March 2021	Closing date for EOIs (MGSE academic teams)
15 April 2021	Selection of successful EOIs
Mid-April to 31 May 2021	Advertising of funded PhD positions (EoI PhD)
June 2021	Shortlisting and interviewing of applicants by academic teams; initial screening by MERI. Shortlisted applicants are invited to put in a full application for candidature for a PhD.
15 August 2021	Due date for full MSS applications (estimate).
Before December 2021	Offers to be made to preferred applicants and enrolment and commencement of PhD candidature.