

FUTURE SOCIAL SERVICE INSTITUTE

PhD Scholarship x 2

Background

The Future Social Service Institute (FSSI) is a collaboration between the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS), RMIT University and the Victorian government. A first of its kind, the Institute aims to:

- Design world-best education programs for the social service sector
- Help train the ‘workforce of the future’
- Research emerging trends and opportunities in social sector reform
- Empower not-for-profits to reorient to a global market

FSSI is seeking to fund two new PhD scholarships. The inaugural 2016 VCOSS – RMIT Scholar is currently investigating whether the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is successful in ensuring the delivery of the best possible strategies of support for people with disabilities; particularly those who experience fluctuating or episodic conditions.

We are now seeking highly motivated and qualified applicants for two PhD scholarships to commence in 2017.

Aims of the PhD Scholarship

The overarching aim of the Future Social Service Institute PhD Scholarship is to generate new research for the benefit of the community services sector and the people who use their services. The specific aims of the scholarship are to:

- Increase the community sector evidence base
- Conduct research based on the priority themes identified by the Future Social Service Institute
- Generate new knowledge that can support sector workforce development, service system reform, policy development and advocacy

Research themes for the PhD Scholarship

The Future Social Service Institute PhD Scholarships will focus on community services sector sustainability and transformation as Victoria, Australia and the Asia-Pacific face one of the largest social service changes in decades. These PhD Scholarships will have a focus on local and national research about the move to consumer directed care, the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and increased marketisation of human services.

The following themes have been identified as a priority for these two new scholarships. The research topic of the scholarship holder must be directly relevant to one or more of these themes:

- The impact of the increased marketisation of human services. This could include the impact on service users, carers and families, organisations or communities.
- The workforce, professional practice or organisational development and structures needed to enable consumer directed care and better outcomes for people's lives.
- Co-production and co-design of services with vulnerable service users.
- The conditions under which consumer choice and control work best to improve outcomes.
- The growth of the social service sector and the status of social support and care work.
- The potential to internationalise social service skills and knowledge in the context of the NDIS reforms and the ageing of the population structure.

Value and Duration of the PhD Scholarship

The value of the Scholarship increases annually in accordance with indexation. In 2016, the PhD Scholarship provides the following:

- a stipend of \$29,288 per annum pro rata (full-time study) which is equivalent to the Government APA rate of \$26,288 plus an RMIT top up of \$3000
- a government-funded Research Training Scheme (RTS) place or equivalent. An RTS place is supported with a HECS exemption for the normal duration of the course. Applicants successful in receiving an RTS place are not required to pay tuition fees for the maximum duration of their candidature

- The standard duration of a research doctorate scholarship is three years full-time. Candidates may apply for an extension of up to six months subject to satisfactory progress and school approval.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for this Scholarship you must:

- Ordinarily have completed a bachelor degree with first class honours. If you do not hold a bachelor degree with first class honours, then RMIT may determine that you have demonstrated an equivalent level of academic attainment.*
- Have applied for a full-time postgraduate research program at RMIT.**
- Meet the entry requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy

* *In determining an equivalent level of academic attainment, RMIT may consider previous study, relevant work experience, research publications, referees' reports and other research experience.*

** *RMIT may approve a part-time research scholarship for a candidate only if the candidate is a domestic candidate and the candidate has exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances relate to significant caring commitments or a medical condition that limits the capacity to undertake full-time study.*

Selection Criteria

Candidates for the Scholarships will be selected according to the following criteria:

- Strong foundational understanding of applied social research
- High level capability to undertake successful study at PhD level
- Ability to prioritise tasks and complete projects on time
- Proficient communication skills and interpersonal working relations
- Alignment of research proposal to the research themes identified for the Scholarship
- Rationale within research proposal for community sector benefit, including broad applicability of research outcomes
- Demonstrated understanding of and commitment to the objectives and values of VCOSS, RMIT and the Future Social Service Institute

How to Apply

The application and selection process for the Scholarships:

Stage 1: Expressions of Interest (Eoi)

You are required to submit an Eoi for the FSSI PhD Scholarship. Eois will be accepted from **22nd August until 14th October 2016**. You are encouraged to submit your Eoi *as early as possible*.

Your Eoi must include a full CV and a first draft research proposal. Your proposal should indicate the nature of the research you wish to do and how you would intend to conduct it. It can be up to two pages long.

You will receive feedback on your Eoi with respect to an application for the FSSI Scholarship. Your CV and Eoi must be sent by email to: guss.research@rmit.edu.au

Stage 2: Pre-Applications

Once your Eoi is accepted you will need to request, complete and submit a Pre-Application Form.

To obtain the Form, email Jenni Morris at guss.research@rmit.edu.au and specify that you are applying for the FSSI scholarship and have had your Eoi accepted.

The pre-application form brings together all your documents and allows us to confirm eligibility for PhD study and to find appropriate supervisors for your research. The form also allows you to complete your response to the Selection Criteria for this Scholarship (see above).

You must submit this form and all associated documents to guss.research@rmit.edu.au by **21st October** at the latest. You are encouraged to submit the Pre-Application Form with all your documents *as early as possible*.

If eligible to make a formal application, you will be informed and provided with the names of two supervisors, which you will need for your formal application as outlined below.

Stage 3: Formal Applications

Applications must be submitted by **31st October 2016**. You should indicate in the Form that you are applying for Admission (tick the box for Scholarships as well **only if** you wish to be considered for Scholarships **additional** to the FSSI Scholarship). See '[How to Apply](#)' for a research program at RMIT. Complete and submit an RMIT Postgraduate Research Admission Form.

Stage 4: Shortlisted applicants will be invited for interview.

Interviews will be held at RMIT City Campus on 15th November 2016. The interview Panel will include staff from VCOSS and from RMIT.

It is expected that offers to the successful candidates will be made by mid-December 2016.

More information:

Mary Sayers

Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Council of Social Service.

mary.sayers@vcoss.org.au

03 9235 1025

Paul Ramcharan

Associate Professor.
RMIT School of Global, Urban and Social Studies

paul.ramcharan@rmit.edu.au

03 9925 3084

Martyn Jones

Associate Professor
RMIT School of Global, Urban and Social Studies

martyn.jones@rmit.edu.au

03 9925 3788