HDR Candidature Support Funding (CSF) Guidelines (MPhil & PhD)

In early 2025 a 25% reduction was imposed on all School and Institute Candidate Support Fund (CFS) budgets. 2026 has seen a further reduction of CFS funding made available for all WSU HDR students.

Subsequently, THRI has updated our internal guidelines for the request and allocation of funding.

Students should only consider core research related funding support requirements for each year of candidature, and understand that in some cases only a contribution towards the request will be allocated, not total costs.

Funds will be made available on a case by case basis; relationship to progression and stage of candidature; and will be distributed fairly across the cohort to ensure equity and progression of all candidates.

There is NO rollover of unused funds from previous years – students should only apply for funding that is critical to progressing their research in any given year.

Significant Changes

1. **Conference Attendance**
   a. Students will be required to apply for a THRI travel award. In some cases, a successful student will be awarded a contribution, not total costs.
   b. Students who have already attended international and/or domestic conferences funded or co-funded from THRI CSF, will be unlikely to receive funding support in 2026.
   c. Conference travel isn't *usually* tied to student progression of candidature, and therefore has been classified as a non-core research expense.
   d. Travel Award eligibility, guidelines, timing and the application process will be outlined in a separate communication.

2. **MRes Support Funding**
   a. Is not considered in this process and will be addressed in a separate communication to the relevant students and supervisors.

3. **Core Research Related Expenses (not an exhaustive list):**
   a. skill development not covered by THRI or GRS expertise, workshops, meetings
   b. research materials or equipment
   c. field work;
   d. transcription costs;
   e. participant reimbursement;
   f. cost to support academic publishing; (gap contribution only)
   g. writing skill development;
   h. editing;
   i. thesis binding; (student copy, scholarship funding body copy if required)
   j. special software purchases;
   k. access to external facilities;
   l. access to specialised equipment;
   m. access to vehicles for field trips;

n. acquisition of data sets (will likely be a contribution, and where possible a tip in/cover by supervisor/s retained funds should also be considered – particularly where the data-set can contribute to other research/publications etc).

4. **Non-Core Research Related Expenses:**
   a. travel for conference attendance;
   b. other travel consumables such as poster printing;

5. **Research Related Expenses Centrally Funded by THRI:**
   a. postage, onsite photocopying, office materials
   b. stationery
   c. laptops where requested
   d. docks, monitors, keyboards, mice (peripheral equipment must be located onsite and not to be taken home)
   e. thesis binding for primary supervisor and THRI library
   f. examiners
   g. cohort training/workshops

Guidelines for Requests – entries for budget tracker & forecast

1. You will be advised when your budget tracker is available for updating – do not update until you receive the notification – the files are being reformatted.

2. Every activity/item requested must be accompanied by a detailed rationale next to your entry. It must include a response to the following questions:
   a. How does the funded activity contribute to your research progression?
   b. Is funding from another source available to contribute the activity? i.e. personal, supervisory, industry/partner bursaries, etc, if so how much?
   c. Can the activity be rescheduled to another year if not funded?
   d. What is the risk to research progression if the activity is delayed or not funded?
   e. Indicate the funding priority for each item if entering multiple items per year.

3. Do not include conference travel in your budget tracker/forecast.

4. Indicate the Quarter/s of the year that you require funding.

5. All MPhil and PhD students who have completed their CoCs are required to enter/revise their budget forecast for 2026.

6. Students are not required to complete a budget tracker until they have passed their COC.

7. Email a copy of your **CoC panel-approved budget** to Chris Martin when you advise you have completed entries for your tracker. Chris.martin@westernsydney.edu.au

Questions relating to this document must be emailed to THRI@westernsydney.edu.au