

SUGAR INDUSTRY POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIPS (SPRS) 2024 APPLICATION KIT



INTRODUCTION

Sugar Research Australia (SRA) invests in and manages a portfolio of research, development and adoption (RD&A) projects that drive productivity, profitability and sustainability for the Australian sugarcane industry.

SRA also invests significantly in industry capability with the ongoing future success of the sugar industry dependent upon improving the capability of existing industry employees. With respect to research funding and encouraging young scientists into our industry, SRA makes available a number of SPRS awards every year, tenable at Australian universities and institutions, for postgraduate research study. The purpose of these awards is to enable qualified graduates to undertake Research Doctorate or Research Masters study and to facilitate research and training in areas of value to the Australian sugarcane industry.

These guidelines are provided to assist applicants in preparing their application for an SPRS award. This document provides the following:

1. an overview of SRA
2. an explanation of the SPRS and eligibility criteria
3. the selection criteria
4. a guide to completing the application
5. details of closing dates and selection timelines
6. an outline of the application outcomes process
7. contact details.

1. Overview of SRA

SRA was established in 2013 as an industry-owned company that invests in and manages a portfolio of RD&A activities that drive productivity, profitability and sustainability for the Australian sugar industry. SRA is funded by a statutory levy paid by grower and milling businesses. This SRA stakeholder investment is also directly supported by matching funds from the Commonwealth Government and grants from the Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and other bodies.

The SRA vision is a trusted partner, shaping the future prosperity of the Australian sugarcane industry and regional communities through innovation and ingenuity. To achieve this vision, SRA collaborates with levy payers, industry representative bodies, government, productivity services, extension providers, other industry stakeholders,

researchers and international peers and partners. SRA works to facilitate and deliver innovative technology and best practice to the sugar industry through a disciplined R&D investment program and practical and effective knowledge exchange that translates R&D into practice.

2. SPRS and eligibility criteria

The purpose of the SPRS is to enable high caliber students to undertake a Masters or PhD research degree in disciplines relevant to the future of the Australian sugar industry.

Scholarships are available for three years for PhD studies and two years for Research Masters studies and are awarded on the basis of academic excellence.

Applicants should consult the [SRA Strategic Plan](#) available on the SRA website and focus on inventive projects that address at least one of the following five Research Missions:

1. Profitable and productive
2. Resilient and enduring
3. Diversified and adaptable
4. Wealth generating through land stewardship
5. Skilled for the future

To be eligible for a full SPRS or a top-up scholarship, the candidate must be a citizen or permanent resident of Australia and must have acceptance at a recognised research institution. The principal supervisor for the postgraduate study program must provide evidence that the host organisation supports the project and the applicant's candidature for the relevant study program.

Awards are tenable at Australian universities or institutions; however, for applicants of proven ability who are undertaking a PhD, training at overseas institutions may be approved where benefits will return to the Australian sugar industry and where overseas supervision will confer additional benefit.

Awards are conferred on the student based on merit, with the evaluation criteria set out within this document. Generic applications from prospective supervisors requesting support for postgraduate research projects without identifying a specific candidate will not be considered.

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The SPRS award offers supplementary or full scholarships, the number and value of which are at the discretion of SRA. For a higher probability of success, the applicant is encouraged to also apply for a Research Training Program (RTP) scholarship or equivalent through their host university. Preference will be given to applicants who receive an RTP or equivalent scholarship.

Successful applicants not holding an RTP scholarship or any other base scholarship will be provided a tax-free stipend of \$32,000 per annum (exclusive of GST).

Successful applicants with an RTP scholarship will be provided a tax free top-up set at a maximum of 75% of the RTP stipend rate which is determined by the [Australian Government Department of Education and Training](#) each year.

All successful applicants will also be provided with an additional budget of \$10,000 (excluding GST) per year to support research project operating expenses.

3. Selection criteria

SPRS awards are competitive and applications will be assessed by the SRA Research Funding Panel (RFP) against the following criteria:

- strong academic record as demonstrated by academic transcripts (a First Class or a high Second Class Honours degree or demonstrated high level of proficiency in postgraduate research activities is expected), and/or experience in the sugarcane industry or the field of endeavour
- research project quality, relevance of the project and its outcomes to the sugar industry and the likelihood of significant industry benefits
- likelihood of the applicant contributing to the sugar industry beyond project completion
- ability of the proposed research supervisor(s) and the capacity of the university and/or other providers to support and mentor the candidate.
- satisfactory referee reports.

4. Guide to completing the application

The SRA SugarNet online submission system must be used for all SPRS applications. This can be accessed at grants.sugarresearch.com.au/

Applications will not be considered to be complete until the curriculum vitae (CV), certified copies of the academic record and academic transcript, letters of reference from at least two referees and proof of nationality or permanent residence visa are uploaded through SugarNet to accompany the application.

The project title needs to be a concise statement of the aim of the proposed research project. The title, objectives and outcomes expected from the project may be published in the SRA Annual Report. Candidates are encouraged to consult their principal supervisor when completing this section of the online submission form.

No additional information or attachments (such as images, diagrams, flow-charts, tables etc.) should be included unless a prior arrangement has been made with SRA.

SRA has a funding agreement with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (QDAF) and any proposal submitted to SRA may attract QDAF funding. QDAF currently commits \$2.85 million of funding annually to SRA for the delivery of Sugarcane research, development and extension projects. In applying for an SPRS award there is the potential to attract the QDAF funding where the business case for investment is strong. All applications will be shared with QDAF during the application assessment process.

5. Closing date and selection timelines

SugarNet will remain open throughout the year starting 1 January to handle SPRS applications, and evaluations of submitted applications will be conducted after applications close on 31 August every year.

6. Application outcomes

Applicants will be advised via email as soon as an outcome to their scholarship application is determined.

7. Contact details

For any queries related to SPRS awards, please contact the Research and Business Development Team on (07) 3331 3333 or by email at sra@researchinvestments@sugarresearch.com.au



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