



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

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John Cripps Horticulture Scholarship

Scheme Guidelines

This guideline contains information for applicants and should be read prior to completing the application form.

October 2025



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John Cripps Horticultural Scholarship

Scheme Overview

The John Cripps Horticulture scholarship (the scholarship) is an investment by the State Government to increase research undertaken in horticulture in Western Australia on issues impacting the productivity, profitability and sustainability of the industry. Research supports the success of West Australian horticulture businesses to meet the challenges that are impacting now and into the future. The challenges currently impacting the industry include productivity, climate variability, pest and diseases management, consumer trends and economic pressures.

This scholarship is established to recognise the importance of research to the WA horticulture industry and is in memory of one of our leading apple breeder and industry legends John Cripps.

The scholarship proposes over time to:

- Develop talented candidates into researchers who can work in both industry and academic settings.
- Strengthen industry-focused innovation and development through greater university-government-industry collaboration.
- Support research projects co-designed between government, university and industry.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development will award this scholarship every two years to support a student in completing a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at a Western Australian university. The research must align with the needs of the Western Australian horticultural industry.

Scholarship funding supports full-time study over a period of three years. While the funding duration is fixed, an extension of time may be granted by the university in extenuating circumstances, subject to satisfactory progress.

The PhD scholarship provides:

- \$50,000 per annum (tax exempt).
- Total value of \$150,000 over three years.

The long-term vision is to increase the number of horticultural researchers based in WA and build a focus on horticulture in our universities.

Opening and Closing Dates for Applications

Applications open on: 10:00am (AWST), Wednesday 22 October 2025

Applications close on: MIDNIGHT (AWST), Friday 13 February 2026

Who can apply for funding?

Students that meet the requirements for entry into a postgraduate program (PhD) at a Western Australian university.

Scholarships are usually awarded to applicants who intend to enrol as full-time internal students based at a Western Australian university, for most or all of their candidature and

scholarship tenure. Approval may be given for a part-time award (domestic students only), where an applicant is able to demonstrate compelling reasons, which would prevent full-time study.

Activities that can be funded

The scholarship is for a student to undertake a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at a Western Australian University which will make an original and significant contribution to knowledge in the horticultural industry in Western Australia and results in a written thesis.

Activities that are cannot to be funded

The scholarship cannot be used for:

- Costs unrelated to the research project such as relocation, travel, etc
- Research where there isn't a clear link or benefit for WA horticulture industry.
- Research undertaken in another state or university outside Western Australia.
- Projects not listed as part of the approved scholarship research topics.
- Postgraduate study at the Master's level (only PhD projects are eligible in this round).

Funding limits and timeframes

Under the Scheme, approved applicants are eligible to receive a maximum of \$50,000 per annum (tax exempt).

The full-time postgraduate scholarship will fund a PhD candidate for \$50,000 per annum. The total value of the scholarship is \$150,000 over three years.

The scholarship will support research projects conducted over a three-year period between 2026 and 2030. All projects should be completed by 31 December 2031. Extensions may be granted by the university in extenuating circumstances, subject to satisfactory progress.

Funding is available to award a new scholarship every two years for the medium to long term.

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility requirements

To be considered for this scholarship, applicants need to complete and apply online via SmartyGrants. Completed applications must be submitted before midnight, Friday 13 February 2026

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for a scholarship, potential applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Have a Bachelor degree with first-class honours (some universities may consider students with upper second-class honours), or a Master degree with a research component or equivalent from a recognised university.
- A record of excellent academic performance.
- Evidence of strong written and spoken English.

- An Australian citizen or have permanent residency status in Australia. Documentary evidence of your entitlement to live and work in Australia for the period of the scholarship.
- Be available to take up the scholarship if offered, for commencement by 31 July 2026. Special approval may be granted on written application, for a later commencement date for those candidates with unavoidable commitments. However, any award or scholarship offered will lapse, if not taken up before the commencement date.

Applicants who are specifically ineligible

Applicants are ineligible for funding if they are:

- Proposing research at a university outside Western Australia. An arrangement with a university external to WA may be considered where a local university is a joint partner, and there is a clear benefit for our horticultural industry. Applicants will need to provide details of the arrangements between universities and how the researcher will connect with the local industry on their project.

Additional information required from Applicant

Applicants must supply the following information:

- **Research topic and methodology**

Select one of the provided research topics and write a summary demonstrating your understanding of the project. The summary should include background and significance of the topic, research aims, a high-level overview of the methodology, experimental design and statistical approach, risk mitigation strategies, and an industry engagement and extension plan (including a timeline or Gantt chart). A brief reference list should also be included.

- **Proposed university, school and supervisor**

Provide the name/s and contact details for the supervisor/s.

Provide the supervisors statement of commitment.

- **Personal statement**

Detail why you want to undertake this research, what you propose to achieve and how you expect to use the knowledge on the completion of your study.

- **Education History**

List all previous and current tertiary studies (completed and incomplete) and upload electronic copies of your official academic transcripts and degree certificates for each program. Documents in a language other than English, must include an official electronic certified translated version.

Note: All applicants for a research higher degree must satisfy the requirements for English language competence set down by the university where their project is proposed to be completed.

- **Publications and conference participation**

List any peer reviewed research articles published in academic journals, within the last five years. Do not list papers which are not yet published.

List any peer reviewed conference papers presented at academic conferences, and subsequently published in full (not abstract), within the last five years.

- **Prizes and grants**

If you been awarded any international, national or other scholarships, prizes or grants within the last five years.

- **Formal professional qualifications**

List any professional qualifications obtained and upload evidence of membership with professional bodies, if applicable.

- **Field work readiness**

Declare a current valid driver's license or alternate for ability to travel regionally. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) plan.

- **Resume**

Upload a resume that details your educational qualifications and full employment history

- **Reference letters**

Upload reference letters from employers detailing dates of employment (within the last five years), the research undertaken, and research output achieved during the period of employment. Do not include references for non-research related employment.

How to apply for scholarship

Applicants must submit an online application in SmartyGrants addressing the assessment criteria and supplying all information requested by midnight, Friday 13 February 2026.

Applications received after this date will not be assessed.

Accessible though: <https://dpird.smartygrants.com.au/JohnCrippsScholarship-R2>

Assessment – How will the applications be assessed

The assessment process aims to objectively identify eligible applicants to whom a scholarship could be awarded. Applications will be assessed by a panel of industry and research representatives by 10 March 2026; and applicants will be informed of the outcome of the selection/decision process by 20 March 2026.

- **Assessment process**

The assessment process will be carried out in the following manner:

All applications are assessed by a panel of industry and research representatives. In assessing the applications, the panel will consider:

- Clarity and feasibility of the applicant's approach to the selected project
- Applicants academic track record and;
- A personal statement.

Assessment criteria

Criterion 1: Research topic – (weighting 50 per cent)

You should demonstrate this through identifying:

- Your understanding of the selected project and its relevance to a WA horticultural crop or industry
- How the research addresses a significant issue impacting productivity, profitability and/or sustainability
- WA university and supervisor
- Proposed approach to achieve the outcome
- Experimental design and statistical readiness
- Identification of risks and mitigation strategies

Criterion 2: Industry engagement (weighting 10 per cent)

- Horticulture industry engagement in project and impact plan
- Extension strategy, proposed outputs, and timeline of milestones

Criterion 3: Academic achievement – (weighting 30 per cent)

You should demonstrate this through identifying:

- Academic achievement as evidenced by their record; and
- Research potential as evidenced by relevant research experience, research output, other research-related achievements and publications, as applicable.

Criterion 4: Personal statement (weighting 10 per cent)

You should demonstrate this through identifying:

- Your personal aims,
- Why do you want to undertake this research project,
- What do you hope to achieve,
- How will the qualification help you.

Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest arises where a person makes a decision or exercises a power in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either material personal interest (financial or non-financial) or material personal associations.

All persons involved in the assessment and decisions of applications will be required to make a conflict-of-interest declaration which will ensure the appropriate identification and management of any conflicts of interest and comply with the Western Australian Public Service Code of Conduct.

An assessor will not participate in the assessment of applications where there is a perceived conflict of interest. The assessment team chair will be responsible for making judgements regarding conflicts of interest.

Decision

The Director, Horticulture and Irrigated Agriculture makes the final decision on who will receive funding under this scheme, based on the information contained within the assessment report provided by the assessment panel.

Appeal process

The decision of the panel is final, there will not be an appeal process.

Notification of application outcomes

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application. Successful and unsuccessful notification will take place within 2 weeks after the decisions have been made.

Agreement Arrangements

If you are a successful applicant, DPIRD will sign an agreement with your university. The agreement will describe how and when payment of the scholarship is to be made, milestones to be and reporting requirements. DPIRD and the horticultural industry will maintain an ongoing interest in your research.

Reporting and monitoring requirements

The reporting arrangements for this scholarship include six (6) monthly reports to be made on the scheme's reporting form.

Any project specific items to be reported on will be identified in the contract.

Reports are to be (submitted online/sent to DPIRD) on or before due dates.

The following activities will be carried out:

- Six (6) month reporting on progress
- Three (3) contacts per year via (email/phone/face to face)
- Attendance at DPIRD Horticulture and Irrigated Agriculture events (1 per year).
- Attendance and presentation of progress at WA Horticulture Update conference
- Periodic information sessions for industry.

National Industry PhD Program

A PhD Candidate who has commenced their first year of study is eligible to apply to join the National Industry PhD Program, subject to the approval of their participating university and their agreement that all other requirements of this program have been met.

Ongoing Eligibility and Termination

DPIRD reserves the right to suspend or terminate the scholarship if the recipient fails to meet agreed academic milestones, reporting obligations, or industry engagement requirements, as outlined in the scholarship agreement. In such cases, unspent funds may be reclaimed, and the scholarship may be reallocated.

Tax information

A full-time scholarship provided principally for educational purposes is tax exempt. Part-time scholarships are subject to having PAYG (income tax) withheld and normal tax treatments apply.

Funding for the scholarship will be provided by DPIRD to the relevant university.

Applicants are encouraged to seek tax advice on the potential implications of obtaining funding.

Personal Information and Disclosure of Information

Applicants are informed that DPIRD is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992 (WA)*, which provides a general right of access to records held by the State Government agencies and local governments.

Intellectual Property

Any intellectual property rights that may exist in an application will remain the property of the applicant or the rightful owner of those intellectual property rights.

Any part of an application considered to contain any intellectual property rights should be clearly identified by the applicant. The applicant grants to the State (and will ensure that relevant third parties grant) a non-exclusive, irrevocable licence to use and reproduce the intellectual property for the purpose of administering the fund.

Payment Arrangements

The payment policy for this scheme is as follows:

- Payments are made by the department to the relevant university who will manage the stipend as part of their higher education program.
- Payments are made in advance, on invoice, annually.
- Payments are made electronically to nominated accounts.

Contact Information

For further information on the scheme please contact:

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Attachment A – Process Overview

Round announcement	
22 October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPIRD publishes application round information. Universities informed of the opportunity.
Applications open	
October 2025 – February 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPIRD opens application portal on 10 am Wednesday 22 October 2025 Universities work with Industry Partners and students to complete an application by MIDNIGHT Friday 13 February 2026
DPIRD manages the application process	
February – March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel assesses applications against eligibility criteria by 10 March 2026 Panel makes recommendations to the Department by 13 March 2026
Outcome notification	
March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPIRD advises candidates, universities and industry partners of decisions by 20 March 2026 Universities and DPIRD negotiate and enter into a collaborative agreement. PhD candidate agree to the terms of the agreement
PhD candidates admitted to universities	
June- July 2024	PhD candidate commences during this period once enrolment processes and collaborative agreement are finalised.

Glossary of Terms

Applicant - the entity/individual who makes the application for funding.

Application - an application (or relevant part of an application) made to the State of Western Australia for funding under the Fund

AWST - Australian Western Standard Time

DPIRD - Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Guidelines – are the guidelines for the scheme, this document

Key Contact – the applicant person to contact if there are any queries or information required in relation to the scheme.

Part-time PhD Candidate - a PhD candidate who undertakes less than 75 per cent of an equivalent full-time student load in the period for which scholarship support is received.

Scholarship – scholarship is a financial grant or assistance given to students to facilitate their education.

SmartyGrants – is the online grant management software tool used by DPIRD.

Important Disclaimer

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it.

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