

19 July 2022

Research Commercialisation Enabling Team
Australian Government Department of Education

Re: Feedback on National Industry PhD Program - draft guidelines consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the National Industry PhD Program draft guidelines. Please find Universities Australia's comments on the draft guidelines below. UA looks forward to working with the Department of Education in promulgating information to universities about this important program when it is established.

Overall comments

- The discovery process between industry and universities will be a potential risk. Section 9.6 notes that the Service Provider will be responsible for promotion and administration of the program. UA would welcome further detail in relation to how this might work.
- As noted in section 4.7 in our comments, UA welcomes the financial support for industry but is concerned that SMEs in particular will not have project lengths that span the full length of a PhD.

During the consultation sessions with the ARC on Industry Fellowships earlier this year, the idea was raised that the candidate (for the Industry Linked PhD stream) could work with multiple industry partners. This does not appear to be possible under the proposed rules. This could be explored, perhaps through a small pilot with industry partners drawn together through an industry representative body.

Specific comments

4.6. UA welcomes the proposed support for candidates. The two types of candidatures can be expected to require the same amount of training and support.

Is the 12-week training for the Industry Linked PhD stream in addition to the candidature term specified in section 3?

If so, then a similar provision should be made for the Industry Researcher PhD stream as they would also arguably benefit from training in research skills and tools.

4.7. UA welcomes that Industry Partner will receive \$40,000 per annum for the program duration to subsidise the time spent on PhD projects by PhD Candidates, as this will enable small businesses who normally would not be able to afford this to take part in the program.

However, small businesses may not be in a position to undertake projects of the duration of a PhD.

6.2. and 6.3. UA would welcome any further information on how participating Universities and industry will be linked in practical terms and whether there will be any support for matching the two. This may be an issue that is responded to by the successful tender, yet will be critical to the success of the program and in addressing the long standing issues of universities and industry working collaboratively.

7.1. How will the Service Provider make the determinations listed under 7.1?

- What criteria will the Service Provider use to determine that research is suitable for a PhD Research Project (7.1.1.)?
- How will the Service Provider know that the PhD Research Project has been identified by the Industry Partner as having demonstrable benefits for their business and interests, and how are 'demonstrable benefits' defined (7.1.2.)?
- Similarly, how is the Service Provider positioned to determine that the PhD Research Project aligns with the Participating University's research interest and capability (7.1.3)?

7.2.1. Further detail would be welcomed regarding the criteria defining the location of the PhD project. On reading, it could be interpreted as either the physical location of the PhD Candidate; the industry partner, or the university.

Attachment A. Section 9.6:

In section 4.6, it is noted that the Service Provider will facilitate the 12-week training program for the Industry Linked PhD. This appears then to be one of the roles that should be included in this section, including an outline of what this means, and that the provider has to have the required capabilities.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Chesworth
Deputy Chief Executive