



WA Agricultural Research Collaboration & Grower Group Alliance Honours Partnership Program 2027

Overview and Expectations

Overview

Following the successful launch of the WA Agricultural Research Collaboration (WAARC) and Grower Group Alliance (GGA) Honours Partnership Program in 2026, WAARC and GGA are teaming up to run the program again in 2027.

This initiative connects Honours students from Curtin University, Murdoch University and The University of Western Australia (UWA) with WA grower groups to tackle real-world agricultural challenges.

Six Honours students will be paired with grower groups to co-design, conduct and deliver research projects that address industry priorities. This hands-on approach ensures students gain meaningful, field-based research experience in regional Western Australia and builds links with industry and the regions. Involved grower groups will gain research tailored to their priorities and an opportunity to bring new thinking and analytical capability into their organisation.

Honours-level training plays a critical role in building Western Australia's research and industry capability. It provides the foundational research skills required by students who choose to pursue a PhD, while also producing graduates with advanced skills beyond those developed through an undergraduate degree alone. Honours graduates are highly valued by industry for their analytical skills, project experience and ability to solve real-world problems.

Together, WAARC and GGA are strengthening Western Australia's research capability and creating a pipeline of skilled professionals for the agriculture and food sector.

Student eligibility

This program is open to a broad range of people interested in undertaking an Honours project, including:

- Recently graduated Degree-level students looking to continue into Honours.
- People currently working in the agriculture sector who want to strengthen their applied research skills through an Honours project.
- Domestic applicants strongly preferred.
- Full-time (over one year) or part-time enrolment (over two years) will be considered.
- You are NOT eligible to apply if you are currently enrolled in, or have already been awarded Honours, Masters or PhD.

Where the student has recently completed their undergraduate degree, it is generally expected the student will have attained an average mark of 65% or higher in their third or final year of study. Applicants returning to study after a period of time will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Please note that for both these scenarios, requirements may differ slightly between universities.

Student expectations and responsibilities

Successful student applicants will receive a \$10,000 Honours scholarship.

Students may commence in Semester 1 (Feb 2027) or Semester 2 (Jul 2027), offering flexibility for both universities and grower groups (unless their chosen course/university does not offer a Semester 2 entry option).

Student responsibilities include:

- Conducting their Honours course as per university requirements and expectations.
- Being aware of and complying with safety, ethics, biosecurity and data management requirements of grower group and university.
- Establishing and maintaining a relationship with their host grower group.
- Spending 2-3 weeks across the year with their host grower group undertaking their research planning and/or implementation, as relevant. (Noting the extent and type of engagement is expected to vary between each situation and will be discussed and clarified once student-host group matches have been made).
- Where possible, providing photos of themselves undertaking Honours research and engagement activities to WAARC/GGA for social media and promotional opportunities, particularly when out in the field and/or engaging with growers/industry.

Operating Funds

In addition to the student scholarship, operating funds of \$10,000 are available. These funds are first and foremost to assist with travel and accommodation expenses associated with agreed engagement activities. The funds may be used for other operating expenses associated with the Honours research project, *only* if they are not required to support travel and accommodation expenses associated with agreed engagement activities.

Operating funds are not permitted to be used for university overheads or capital items. Unused operating funds, or funds not used as approved, must be returned to WAARC.

The use of the \$10,000 operating funds must be discussed and agreed upon jointly by the student, host group and primary supervisor. The funds will be held and dispersed through the university's primary supervisor.

Host grower group eligibility

This program is open to all grower groups within the GGA network who are interested in hosting an Honours student. Groups who have previously hosted a student through this Program are eligible to apply again.

Host grower group expectations and responsibilities

Successful grower groups will receive a \$10,000 hosting fee to assist with meeting their responsibilities as per below.

For a full-time student, the commitment is expected to be about nine months if starting in Semester 1 (Feb 2027) and finishing at the end of Semester 2 (Nov 2027). If starting in Semester 2 (Jul 2027), the timeframe will extend across the summer and through to Jun 2028. A part-time student would require a similar time commitment spread over a two-year period.

The grower group must have the capacity to appropriately host a student in its region across the period of the Honours course, including:

- Establishing and maintaining a working relationship with ‘their’ Honours student.
- Where possible, co-designing or providing input on the Honours research proposal with the student and supervisor to ensure industry, local and practical relevance.
- Facilitating access to local/regional sites, knowledge, growers and trial infrastructure, as relevant.
- Providing feedback and support to the student in local implementation of the research project, where relevant.
- Ensuring any safety, ethics, biosecurity and data management requirements of the grower group are communicated to the student/university prior to and upheld during any local/regional research project development and implementation activities.
- Maintaining a ‘live’ spreadsheet of potential, planned and completed student engagement activities to update and share at relevant intervals with the student and supervisor. Decisions regarding the use of the \$10,000 operating funds must be discussed and agreed upon jointly by the student, host group and supervisor.
- There is an expectation that the student will be physically present in the regions with the grower group for a minimum of 2-3 weeks of the Honours period, as relevant. (Noting the extent and type of engagement is expected to vary between research projects and will be discussed and clarified once student-host group matches have been made).

The research topic is expected to be of value or interest to the grower group. Given the short timeframe for the student to complete the research project and final write-up, it may be beneficial for the topic to align with an existing or multi-year research project.

Monitoring and evaluation expectations

WAARC/GGA's monitoring and evaluation of the Honours program will include check-ins with each student-host group partnership to understand how the experience is progressing, including:

- Value, benefits, unanticipated outcomes.
- Challenges, anything to improve/adjust for this time or next.
- Documentation of potential, planned and completed student engagement activities.
- 2-3 check-ins per full-time Honours period, including one on completion.

University contributions and responsibilities

Includes Scholarships Offices, Schools/Institutes and Supervisors.

- Ensure/coordinate student public liability insurance coverage associated with undertaking Honours research.
- Provide oversight for all academic requirements and processes.
- Ensure/coordinate risk management processes associated with undertaking research are in place, including workplace health and safety, ethics approvals, biosecurity and data management.
- The primary supervisor holds and disperses the \$10,000 travel/operating funds for the Honours student/research project. (Noting activities/expenses funded through the \$10,000 allocation must be agreed upon jointly by the student, host group and supervisor).
- The Scholarship Offices will manage the set up and funding arrangements for student scholarships and operating funds.

Grower Group Alliance (GGA) contributions and responsibilities

GGA contributions and responsibilities to the program include:

- EOI out to grower groups seeking interest in hosting and/or a local Honours student.
- Support/implement a communications strategy (with WAARC) to attract host grower groups and students and promote program outcomes and achievements.
- Invoice WAARC for hosting fees on behalf of grower groups.
- Provide governance oversight for program (with WAARC).

WAARC contributions and responsibilities

WAARC's contributions and responsibilities to the program include:

- Initial and ongoing liaison with the universities, grower groups and students to establish and manage the scholarships.
- Cash contribution and administration of the student scholarship, travel and grower group hosting fee.
- Manage student application and assessment process.
- Manage process to match students with supervisors, grower groups and topics.
- Letters of Offer to successful students, supervisors and host groups.
- With GGA, plan and implement a communications strategy to attract host grower groups and students and promote the program outcomes and achievements.
- Provide governance oversight for the program (with GGA).

Interested?

Contact WAARC Program Lead, Capacity Building and Extension - Jenny Crisp at jenny.crisp@uwa.edu.au for more information.