Construction Industry Doctorate Program (CIDP)

The University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Western Sydney University (WSU) and Office of NSW Building Commissioner (OBC) have combined to develop this unique Industry Doctorate Program.

The Construction Industry Doctorate Program (CIDP) is supported by an exclusive data access agreement – providing successful students with special access to the Construct NSW data lake of insights, from the OBC's ongoing occupancy certificate audits and NSW Project Remediate program.

Designed to meet the needs of industry

The CIDP is a vocational PhD program that matches leading construction industry organisations with world-class research expertise, facilities, and resources.

It has been specifically designed to support The Construct NSW reform strategy, which is to produce more trustworthy buildings through a more customer-focused, ethical, sustainable, innovative, and digitally-enabled construction industry.

The CIDP provides exciting opportunities for thought-leaders from across the construction industry to challenge old institutional models, practices and norms, and to transform traditional ways of thinking by imagining a more trustworthy built world.

How the program works

OBC advertises the CIDP program on its website & LinkedIn

Identifies interested candidates and supportive organisations.

(There are no deadlines for applications – these are assessed regularly.)

Applicants liaise with university to develop a submission to OBC

Email Professor Martin Loosemore to start this process and find out key application dates for next intake.

Applicants submit expressions of interest to the OBC

When applications are open, you can use this form to apply through either of two routes.

Sponsored route

For applicants who are sponsored by their employer

Non-sponsored route

For applicants who are seeking a sponsor

OBC assesses submissions

Panel of reps from UTS, OBC, WSU and sponsoring company

Successful candidates nominate to enrol

You'll be supervised by internationally renowned experts from your chosen institution. Read more on UTS enrolment process here

Work with supervisor to refine PhD proposal

Turning your submission into a structured PhD proposal.

Admission to doctorate program

When candidate meets PhD entry requirements

Work closely with supervisory team and OBC

Including accelerated access to OBC data lake

Progress reviews & OBC reports until thesis complete

Ensures work meets UTS progress requirements as well as industry needs and priorities.

Priority research areas

You're invited to submit your proposal to OBC under one or more of the following priority research areas:

1. Contract governance
2. Project documentation
3. Material input (BAS)
4. Human input (DBP)
5. Compliance (RAB & DBP)
6. Embodied carbon
7. Modern regulator case study
8. Digital transformation
9. Economic benefit (reforms)
10. Digital learning
11. Remediate case study
12. Supplier product traceability case study

Who can apply?

In general, applicants will need:

- To be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- Minimum of ten years' experience in the Australian built environment industry (quality and relevance of this experience will be assessed)
- Three industry referees, to attest to applicant's expertise and research competency
- Experience of research in a work and/or study context
- To intend to work in the Australian construction industry after completing the CIDP
- To have completed:
    - a recognised Masters degree by research, or Bachelors degree with first or second class Honours (division 1), OR
    - An equivalent or higher qualification, OR
    - Other evidence of general and professional qualifications demonstrating potential to pursue graduate research study.

In addition:

- Sponsored applicants employed by a sponsoring organisation must have that organisation's support
- Non-sponsored applicants will be assessed by the sponsoring organisation and then endorsed before applying to UTS.

Applicants who are employed in the construction industry (including contracting, consulting, etc.) and who have the support of their employers are preferred. Outstanding applicants not employed within the industry and without the support of a sponsoring organisation may be assisted by the OBC to find sponsorship.

Interdisciplinary insights are important to the outcomes of the program, so applications are welcome from a range of industry disciplines, including:

- Construction
- Engineering
- Architecture
- Design
- Law
- Manufacturing
- Business
- Technology

What organisations can sponsor?

The success of the program rests on the support of sponsoring organisations. The program welcomes supportive organisations from all sectors of related industries:

- Private sector organisations (e.g. contractors, consultants, suppliers and manufacturers, startups, SMEs and other corporates)
- State owned enterprises
- Public sector organisations
- Non-governmental organisations
- Governments (local, state or federal)
- Government funded research organisations

How long does it take?

With UTS, the CIDP comprises a 3 - 4 year full-time research project. All successful PhD candidates will be sponsored and will typically be based in the partner organisation, investigating a complex industry problem.

Successful candidates who are employed by the company sponsoring them are expected to be able to work on the research project for at least 50% of their time. Those who are not employed by the company sponsoring them are expected to spend a large proportion of their time (typically 70-80%) at the premises of their collaborating company, depending on the nature of the project.

What does it cost?

The majority of domestic students offered entry to the CIDP will have the cost of their tuition fees covered by the Australian Government's Research Training Program (RTP) Fees Offset Scholarship. Note that such recipients should still expect to pay the ongoing costs of being part of an academic environment and conducting research, including a Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF).

For successful candidates who are employed by the company sponsoring them, there are two options:

- *Option A:* The industry sponsor continues to pay their employee's salary, plus an annual research support fee of $5000 per year for three years (for attendance at conferences and other dissemination/data collection costs).
- *Option B:* The sponsor pays the university $45k per annum, which goes to the candidate as a tax-free stipend. The candidate may also remain employed for up to 20 hours per week. The industry sponsor also pays an annual research support fee of $5000 per year for three years (for attendance at conferences and other dissemination/data collection costs).

For successful PhD candidates who are not employed by the company sponsoring them, the sponsoring organisation (once approved) pays a tax-free stipend of $45,000 per year for three years to cover student living costs.

UTS additional support

UTS appreciates the financial challenges that research activities can present, and offers the following extra support for CIDP students:

- Apply for up to $1,500 during candidature (duration of PhD) to attend external researcher development activities not offered at UTS. This is non-competitive and is budgeted for every IDP student.
- Apply for up to $5,000 during candidature to attend and present their research at an internationally recognised conference. Again, this is non-competitive and budgeted for every IDP student.

In the event that candidates experience financial hardship during their studies, additional financial advice and support is available to all UTS students.

Assessment

Candidates are required to complete a thesis under the supervision of appropriate members of academic staff. Three types of thesis will be considered for submission at UTS:

- A conventional thesis;
- A thesis by compilation;
- Thesis including artefacts, exhibition, performance or portfolio of professional or creative work.

Additional detail of thesis expectations under each of these options is available on the UTS website.

Your thesis will demonstrate that you have contributed to the advancement of knowledge in your chosen field, and that you'll be capable of applying the knowledge and expertise acquired in a business environment in a disciplined, innovative and penetrating way.

During your candidacy, you'll be required to submit, in consultation with your supervisor(s), regular progress reports (at the end of each session), and to complete a doctoral assessment and seminar.

Formal units of study or other work may also be prescribed to support you to develop your research skills or knowledge of the industry you're working in. This taught component will be assessed and form an integral part of the degree.

You are also invited to participate in other research activities to support the development of your research skills.

What's in it for industry?

Industry supporters benefit from a targeted applied research program that genuinely responds to the needs of the construction industry and your organisation – regardless of your organisation's size.

Supporters also gain access to world-class researchers, research facilities and research infrastructure at UTS – and to future opportunities for industry-university research collaborations. The firsthand experience of innovation you'll experience delivers a genuine opportunity to embed an innovation culture in your organisation. As each project requires a project sponsor from within your organisation, additional staff development opportunities will necessarily arise.

Furthermore, ownership of any intellectual property generated during the project remains with the supporter.

What's in it for students?

Every candidate gains experience working on a real-world research problem of national and international significance, in collaboration with UTS and OBC. They also get exclusive and accelerated access to OBC's data lake, plus access to the world-class UTS research facilities in the heart of Sydney's emerging Innovation precinct

You'll also experience working in partnership with world-class researchers, internationally recognised as leaders in their field.

You'll have the chance to receive input and guidance from both academia and industry, and the benefit of seeing the immediate impact of your work on real world projects. You'll grow your research and professional skill sets, build industry and university connections, and get access to a range of new career opportunities. Over half of new Australian PhDs work outside of higher education, and this number is on the rise!

In short

A diverse range of industries and organisations rely on research or research skills to solve real-world problems, including business, government, cultural and community organisations. Industry collaborations are becoming an ever-more important part of academia as well.

The new CIDP program provides you with the opportunity to engage with industry, shape research thinking in line with real-world problems, develop strong professional capabilities, and enhance your professional networks and career prospects.

Our ambition at UTS is to see our PhD candidates re-enter industry not only with a recognised doctorate, but with the knowledge, skills and connections to be truly 'world ready'.