

Ministry of Fisheries Postgraduate Scholarships in Quantitative Fisheries Science for the 2012 Academic Year

Introduction

In collaboration with NIWA, the Ministry of Fisheries is offering postgraduate scholarships for Masters and PhD students. The scholarships were established in 2006 to allow graduate students to develop expertise in quantitative fisheries science in New Zealand. The research undertaken will contribute to quantitative fisheries research programmes with *particular emphasis on the assessment of fish stock modelling*. The Ministry of Fisheries wishes to develop this area of research, as there is a shortage of trained quantitative fisheries graduates in New Zealand to undertake research and contribute to the sustainable use of fisheries.

The objectives of the Ministry of Fisheries Graduate Scholarships in Quantitative Fisheries Science are:

- to attract high performing New Zealand students into quantitative marine science;
- to promote and encourage excellence in quantitative fisheries research;
- to encourage postgraduate students to contribute to priority fisheries research areas identified by the New Zealand Government;
- to provide opportunities for students to carry out research with NIWA and/or MFish scientists in established and new quantitative fisheries research programmes;
- to train students at the postgraduate level by sharing and using the combined expertise of university academics, MFish and practising NIWA scientists; and
- to facilitate the professional development of postgraduate students by exposure to an applied commercial research environment.

Applicants with majors or minors in mathematics, statistics, and/or biology are encouraged to apply. It is expected that applicants will have a strong quantitative background and an interest in applied statistics. It is recommended that only those students who have taken statistics or mathematics courses at or beyond the second year level submit an application.

Stock assessment will be the major focus of the scholarship programme. It is recognised that a small post-graduate project (MSc) may be a component of a bigger project relating to this criterion. NIWA facilities and resources will be available for research where appropriate.

Scholarships Available

- PhD – up to \$30,000 pa for up to three years
- Masters – up to \$25,000 pa for up to two years

The number of scholarships available at PhD and MSc levels is dependent on the number of suitable applicants. Please note that university fees are not covered as part of these scholarships. Students are expected to organise payment of their own fees.

Eligibility

- Applicants need to be New Zealand citizens or permanent residents.
- Study must be undertaken within New Zealand (with the possibility of some course work being undertaken through an Australian university).
- You must be eligible to undertake an MSc or PhD at any New Zealand university.
- You must undertake full-time study.
- A suitable university supervisor and NIWA or MFish technical advisor must be agreed upon prior to application.
- There are no age restrictions.
- Study must commence within 6 months of receiving this scholarship.
- You may hold other scholarships but these must be disclosed to the Ministry of Fisheries. Students are encouraged to apply for additional scholarships that cover the payment of fees.

Application Process

All dates refer to the year prior to the possible receipt of a scholarship.

Stage 1: Application Part I (to be submitted to the Ministry of Fisheries by September 20th)

For MSc candidates this includes a current CV (outlining previous work experience, nationality, any relevant research experience and background in quantitative methods), a brief statement outlining why they are interested in this opportunity and a copy of their academic transcripts to enable initial suitability as a candidate for the scholarship to be determined. Transcripts should be accompanied by a list of courses taken with a 10-20 word description of each course (as course titles on transcripts are not always informative). Doctoral candidates are also required to include no more than 1 page outlining possible thesis topics, areas of research interest, and potential supervisors.

Stage 2: will occur by September 30th

Candidates will be assessed. Short-listed candidates for MSc will be contacted to discuss their research interests and develop a project proposal and discuss proposed course work. Short-listed candidates for PhD may be required to attend an interview with an MFish and NIWA selection panel. Non-shortlisted candidates will also be informed that they have not progressed to stage 3.

Stage 3: Application – Part II (to be submitted to the Ministry of Fisheries by November 23rd)

This must include a full project proposal, an updated CV, a statement of career goals and aspirations, a completed application form and two referees' reports from suitably qualified academics/researchers attesting to the abilities of the student.

Stage 4: to be completed by December 20th

Short-listed candidates applications will be assessed and applicants informed of the outcome of their application.

Selection Procedures

A Selection Committee comprising individuals from MFish and NIWA will review applications for the scholarships. The decision of the Committee will be final and no discussion will be entered into.

In Stage 2 candidates will be assessed upon their academic achievement and other relevant skills and experience. Priority will be given to New Zealand citizens and those candidates with an interest in applied statistics and a background in mathematics or statistics.

In Stage 4 candidates will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Academic achievement
- Suitability of supervisor (university) and co supervisor (NIWA or MFish)
- Feasibility and applicability of proposed research
- Relevant skills and experience (with an emphasis on quantitative skills)

Terms and Conditions

You must have the agreement in principle of a University for you to undertake the proposed study prior to Stage 4 of the application. By this it is meant that a suitable supervisor and co supervisor has been sought, and a proposal has been developed in conjunction with NIWA and/or MFish and the University. The scholarship will be terminated if you are not subsequently accepted into an MSc or PhD programme.

Obligations and Agreements for Successful Applicants

Notification to Applicants:

Once the Selection Committee has made a decision applicants will be notified by email of their results, and any feedback from the Committee. Applicants who are offered a scholarship must formally accept it by signing a contract drawn up by MFish outlining the value of the scholarship, how funds will be paid and any obligations the student must fulfil.

Payment of Funds:

The scholarship will be paid in quarterly instalments following completion of a quarterly progress report by the student. Payment of personal income tax is the responsibility of the student, not MFish. Liability for personal income tax will depend on the personal circumstances of the student. Although the scholarship is not likely to be liable for income tax students should contact the Inland Revenue Department to clarify this.

Student Obligations:

The student is required to pursue the course of study outlined in their application form in accordance with the requirements of the host tertiary education organisation. In cases where the proposed course of study changes or the student's ability to undertake the course of study changes, MFish must be notified immediately. If the student withdraws from the course of study before completion, the student may be required to repay MFish any funds that have already been received.

All applications should be sent to Richard Ford at the Ministry of Fisheries by e-mail: richard.ford@fish.govt.nz, tel 04 819 4664.