Fisheries New Zealand/NIWA Masters Scholarships in Quantitative Fisheries Science for the 2024 Academic Year

All applications should be sent to the Science Officer at Fisheries New Zealand by e-mail: science.officer@mpi.govt.nz by October 31st 2023

Introduction

In collaboration with NIWA, Fisheries New Zealand is offering masters scholarships for the next academic year. The scholarships were first 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 models for assessing the status of fish stocks or models for assessing marine ecosystems.* Fisheries New Zealand wishes to develop these areas of research, as there is a shortage of trained quantitative graduates in New Zealand to undertake research and contribute to the sustainable use of fisheries.

The objectives of Fisheries New Zealand/NIWA Graduate Scholarships in Quantitative Fisheries Science are:

- to attract New Zealand students into quantitative marine science;
- to promote and encourage excellence in quantitative fisheries research;
- to encourage masters 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 Fisheries New Zealand scientists in established and new quantitative fisheries research programmes;
- to train students at the masters level by sharing and using the combined expertise of university academics, Fisheries New Zealand and practising NIWA scientists; and
- to facilitate the professional development of masters students through exposure to an applied commercial research environment.

Applicants with majors or minors in mathematics, statistics, computing and/or biology are encouraged to apply. Preference will be given to those students who have a strong quantitative background (preferably including applied statistics), with marine biology. It is recommended that only those students who have taken statistics or mathematics courses at or beyond the second year level submit an application.

It is recognised that an MSc may be a component of a bigger project relating to stock assessments or ecosystem modelling. NIWA facilities and resources will be available for research where appropriate.

Scholarships Available

- Masters –$20,000 p.a. for up to two years

The number of scholarships available at MSc level is partly dependent on the number of suitable applicants. Please note that university fees are not specifically covered as part of these scholarships, although of course the funds received can be used for this purpose. 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 at any New Zealand university.
- You must undertake full-time study.
- A suitable university supervisor and NIWA or Fisheries New Zealand technical advisor must be agreed prior to stage 2 of the application (organising a potential University supervisor is desirable but not necessary for stage 1).
- Undergraduate study must have contained at least two 200-level papers in mathematics, statistics or computer science, and at least one 300-level paper in mathematics, statistics or computer science.
- 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 Fisheries New Zealand.

Application Process

Stage 1: Application Part I (to be submitted to Fisheries New Zealand by October 31st 2023)
This includes a current CV (outlining previous work experience, nationality, any relevant research experience and background in quantitative methods), a cover letter outlining why you are interested in this opportunity and a copy of your 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 10-50 word description of each course (as course titles on transcripts are not always informative).

Please also let us know how you heard about the scholarship when submitting your application to science.officer@mpi.govt.nz.

Candidates will be assessed by November 30th 2023. Short-listed candidates will be contacted to discuss their research interests and develop a project proposal and discuss proposed course work. Non-shortlisted candidates will also be informed that they have not progressed.

Stage 2: Application – Part II (to be submitted to Fisheries New Zealand by February 20th 2024)
This must include a project proposal, an updated CV, a statement of career goals and aspirations, a completed application form and two reference's from suitably qualified academics/researchers attesting to the abilities of the student. The project proposal does not need to outline all details of the proposed research, but must contain sufficient detail that Fisheries New Zealand and NIWA can evaluate its feasibility and utility.

Selection Procedures

A Selection Committee comprising individuals from Fisheries New Zealand 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 those candidates with an interest in applied statistics (preferably in combination with marine biology) and a background in mathematics, statistics or computing.

In Stage 2 candidates will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Academic achievement
- Choice of papers if taught year funded or papers taken if funding is for thesis year only
- Suitability of supervisor (university) and co supervisor (NIWA or Fisheries New Zealand)
- 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 2 of the application. By this it is meant that a suitable supervisor and/or co-supervisor has been sought, and a proposal has been developed in conjunction with NIWA and/or Fisheries New Zealand and the University. The scholarship will be terminated if you are not subsequently accepted into an MSc 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 Fisheries New Zealand 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 quarterly progress reports by the student and their supervisor. Payment of personal income tax is the responsibility of the student, not Fisheries New Zealand. 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. If a scholarship is granted for both the papers and thesis year of the MSc then Fisheries New Zealand need to approve the choice of papers. In cases where the proposed course of study changes or the student's ability to undertake the course of study changes, Fisheries New Zealand must be notified immediately. If the student withdraws from the course of study before completion, the student may be required to repay Fisheries New Zealand any funds that have already been received.