

Terms of Reference - Rutherford Foundation Fellowships and Scholarships

Background

The Royal Society Te Apārangī-Rutherford Foundation (the Foundation) was established as a Charitable Trust in 2008 with the aim of building human capability in science and technology by providing support for excellent New Zealand early career researchers. The Foundation offered scholarships and fellowships, which carried the hallmark of excellence enabling strong connections to New Zealand to be maintained, thereby increasing the benefits to New Zealand that accrue from the investment in these recipients. The Trust was wound up in 2018 when the management of the Foundation's funding opportunities was transferred to the Royal Society Te Apārangī (the Society).

Objective

The objectives of the Rutherford Foundation Fellowships and Scholarships are to support the education and development of promising excellent early career researchers with the potential to excel in a research environment. The funding opportunities support early career researchers who demonstrate a passion for research, science and technology, and have a strong sense of the purpose and benefits of research to New Zealand. Receipt of a Rutherford Foundation award is expected to have a significant value in the future career development of the supported Scholars and Fellows and help them to establish a foundation on which to embark on an independent research career.

Description

At least five prestigious New Zealand Postdoctoral Fellowships of two years in length will be awarded on a competitive basis annually, for research based in a New Zealand host institution. In addition, and supported by a Memorandum of Understanding with the Cambridge Commonwealth International and European Trust (CCEIT), up to two Cambridge Rutherford Memorial PhD Scholarships of three years in length can be awarded each year unless otherwise agreed to between CCEIT and the Society.

Criteria

The award criteria must ensure successful proposals are consistent with the background and objectives of the Fellowships stated above. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and the Society will determine eligibility and selection criteria, and may adjust these from time to time to increase the scheme's effectiveness. The Society will publish these criteria annually at the start of each funding round. The award criteria will be based on the following eligibility and selection criteria:

Eligibility

- Applicants must be either New Zealand citizens, or have continuously resided in New Zealand for at least two years immediate prior to their application and hold, or be deemed to hold, a New Zealand resident visa.

New Zealand Postdoctoral Fellowship

- For the purpose of the Rutherford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship, early-career researchers are researchers whose doctoral degrees were conferred no more than four years prior to the year in which the fellowship is awarded.
 - An exemption to this clause can be sought to allow applicants to demonstrate that their PhD has been submitted and can be examined by the date of short-listing.
 - A further exemption can be sought to demonstrate a reasonable absence from a research career, for instance to take parental leave or for extended sickness leave.
 - Applicants must be supported by a New Zealand-based research institution that can provide the appropriate support and facilities to enable the applicant to succeed in their Fellowship for the full two years of the Fellowship's term.

Cambridge-Rutherford Memorial PhD Scholarship

For the purpose of the Cambridge-Rutherford Memorial PhD Scholarship, applicants must be

- Applicants who hold, or are deemed to hold, a New Zealand resident visa are also required to have completed their undergraduate study in New Zealand to be considered eligible to apply.
- Applicants must be in a position that, if successful, they would be able to enter the United Kingdom and comply with the regulations for matriculation at the University of Cambridge.

Selection criteria for all supported schemes:

- Demonstration of academic excellence
- Quality of the proposed research programme
- Depth of understanding of the proposed research, its ultimate purpose, and benefits to New Zealand
- Additional criterion that may be considered: transfer of skills.

Rules:

Postdoctoral Fellowships:

- Successful applicants must commence their programme of research with 6 months of the award notification unless otherwise agreed to by the Society.
- If the applicant is not already an employee of the host institution, the host must agree to employ the applicant for the duration of the fellowship.

Cambridge-Rutherford Memorial PhD Scholarship

- Successful applicant must commence their course of study in following year unless otherwise agreed to by the Society.

Selection Process

The Society will appoint a selection panel, chaired by the President of the Royal Society, or their nominee, to oversee the selection process. The chair of the panel will work with the Society's

nominated manager to determine the best process to be used. Advice shall be sought from the selection panel as to the allocation of funds to successful awardees. This advice shall normally be accepted by the Society. In the event of non-acceptance of advice from the selection panel, the Society will notify MBIE in writing and then enter into a dispute resolution process as per clause 17 of the Umbrella Agreement.

Operation

Fellowships and Scholarships are awarded on a full-time basis (1 FTE), unless otherwise agreed to by the Society.

The Rutherford Foundation New Zealand Postdoctoral Fellowship will award a minimum contribution of \$75,000 per annum towards the researcher's salary and \$10,000 (GST excl.) per annum in research-related expenses.

The Cambridge-Rutherford Memorial PhD Scholarship will award a living allowance (maintenance) of approximately £13,900 per annum (subject to adjustments being made by the CCEIT), for up to a maximum of three years. For the three years a successful applicant is enrolled for study towards their PhD at the University of Cambridge, their course and college fees will be paid. Expenses for living allowance and fees are expected to be shared equally between the Society and the CCEIT. In addition, awardees are eligible for one non-transferable return airfare between the United Kingdom and New Zealand per annum, which is covered by the Society.

Reporting, monitoring and evaluation

The Royal Society will report to MBIE on the Rutherford Foundation Fellowships and Scholarships in accordance with the Funding Agreement. The reporting will include:

- information on the applications, monitoring of the Fellows and administration of the scheme
- any suggested changes to the scheme that might improve it obtaining its objective
- ongoing assessment of the impact of the scheme on Fellows after the completion of their Fellowship.

An evaluation framework will also be developed by the Royal Society in consultation with MBIE. The Royal Society will provide evidence to MBIE that the Programme:

- is helping New Zealand develop its best early-career researchers
- is helping the researchers accelerate their personal development and the establishment of a strong foundation to their research career
- provides advancement of knowledge
- supports early-career researchers recognised for excellence
- enhances the international reputations of New Zealand researchers
- is supporting increased research productivity
- has attracted national recognition and prestige for the recipients of the awards.