

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Trade and Investment Research Scholarship**

Regulations and Guidelines for Applicants

Deadline for Application: 5pm, Friday 10 February 2012

Purpose

Each year the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) offers five \$7,500 scholarships to post-graduate students doing a research-based thesis or research report on a topic relevant to increasing the value of New Zealand's exports and offshore earnings.

The purpose of the MFAT scholarships is to build research capacity in the trade and investment area; encourage research applicable to trade and investment; increase the profile of trade and investment related research; and create stronger links between researchers, industry, the public sector and international research organisations.

Research Topics and Information Sources

The research topic can be in any trade and investment related area that focuses on increasing the value of New Zealand exports and offshore earnings. MFAT will give preference to quality applications that address areas of relevance to the Government's trade policy and implementation initiatives (including the trade negotiation agenda) and other international connections (see www.mfat.govt.nz/Trade-and-Economic-Relations/ for more information). Please email vicki.plater@mfat.govt.nz if you require more information.

Industry Targeted Output

We encourage applicants to engage with industry to strengthen their research proposals by ensuring their research is relevant to the needs of industry. Scholarship holders are required to produce an 'industry output' on completion of their research report. These reports (around 2-3 pages) will outline the key findings relevant to industry.

Research Plan

Applicants should submit a relevant and quality preliminary research plan, which outlines how they propose to address their research. This research plan should not exceed four pages, and should include:

- The question(s) or industry issue/problem being investigated, including relevant background and literature;
- An outline of proposed methodology;
- A proposed industry targeted output (e.g. a short 2-3 page report);
- Any proposed travel;
- Evidence of research support. This could include a plan for industry engagement endorsed by your academic department, a letter of support from a relevant industry organisation, or demonstrated links with people in the industry.

We appreciate that research plans may be modified once the research has started, and that scholarship holders may need to refine topics and methodology. If applicants are not in a position to supply a detailed research plan, a conceptual piece with supporting literature and possible methodology will be adequate. This plan should not exceed four pages.

Referees

Applicants will require **two** referees to complete the confidential report forms available with the application documents. Referees' report should be sent **directly** to MFAT no later than **5pm, Friday 10 February 2012**. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the referees' reports arrive before the deadline.

The referees should provide testimony to the level at which the applicant will undertake research, produce the industry output and work effectively with others. At least one referee's report should address the applicant's qualifications and ability to carry out the research. MFAT reserves the right to seek further information from referees as required.

All referees' reports should be posted, emailed or faxed to:

Vicki Plater
 Head of Research, Economic Division
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 Private Bag 18-901
 Wellington
 Email: vicki.plater@mfat.govt.nz
 Fax: 04 4 439 8545

Criteria and Eligibility

Applicants must be enrolling in a post-graduate programme in 2012 and must be intending to undertake a thesis or research report. The primary focus is on students undertaking full time study in trade and investment related courses. Applications from students undertaking part-time study may be considered at the discretion of the sponsors. Criteria for selection of scholarship recipients will include:

- Proposed research topic
- The applicability and accessibility of the research to industry
- A quality and detailed research plan (as outlined above)
- The proposed industry output
- Evidence of research support
- Academic competence and ability to complete the intended study (academic transcripts and referee's reports will need to be submitted with the applications)
- Practical experience, networks or engagement with industry.

Application

An application should be made via the Trade and Investment Research Scholarship application form available from the MFAT website:

<http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Trade-and-Economic-Relations/Trade-scholarships/index.php>

Applications should arrive no later than **5pm, Friday 10 February 2012**. Applicants not already enrolled in a post-graduate course at a university must provide an academic contact and proof that their plan has been approved by the institution at which they intend to study.

Selection Panel and Process

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The selection panel will favour applications which:

- Meet the requirements as set out by the criteria for selection
- Address the Government's objectives to increase the value of New Zealand's exports and offshore earnings
- Address a topic of current interest to the Government's trade policy and implementation, or investment, agenda
- Provide a quality and detailed research plan
- Are supported by excellent references
- Show engagement with industry, e.g. employment experience, internships, assistance with accessing potential respondents or support from mentors.

The selection process will be undertaken by MFAT, drawing on external expertise as required. Short listed applicants may be invited to attend an interview.

Value and Number

A total amount of \$7,500 will be available for each successful applicant. The scholarship is intended to help cover tuition fees, research costs (including travel and data needs) and contribute to basic living costs. In 2012, there will be five scholarships available. The scholarships will be tenable for approximately one year. There is no GST associated with these scholarships.

Conditions of Tenure

Recipients are free to seek other financial support while holding the scholarship and may concurrently hold other bursaries, scholarships or sponsorships. MFAT should be informed of other support and any conditions with that support, which may affect the Trade and Investment Research Scholarship. A copy of the resulting industry report(s) must be lodged with the MFAT to receive the final scholarship payment. This industry report may be published on its website www.mfat.govt.nz. MFAT also reserves the right to use the research results and outputs.

MFAT reserves the right to use the names, photographs and details of successful applicants for publicity purposes. If requested by MFAT, recipients are expected to agree to participate in any promotional activity including interviews and presenting their field of study to selected groups.

Monitoring and Reporting

The standards against which the scholarship outputs will be assessed will be high academic quality and the applicability and accessibility of the research to potential users. Supervisors, students and the funders will ascertain what is expected of individual scholarship holders (i.e. a presentation or a report for industry) and build these into agreed standards and milestones. These are likely to include:

- Developing a final research plan that aligns with industry research needs.
- Milestone reports and academic outputs as agreed between supervisor and student – and between them and MFAT.
- Completing an industry targeted output, as specified in the research plan.
- Scholarship holders will be asked to complete an Output, Milestone and Payment Template.
- Recipients of the Trade and Investment Research Scholarship are encouraged to consider and discuss their research plan with supervisors/or Masters co-ordinators as early as possible.

Payment Schedule

Based on the Output, Milestone and Payment Template, which each successful applicant will complete, MFAT will agree an appropriate schedule of payments with each student. Payments may spread over more than 12 months in order to support students writing their industry outputs after submitting their theses/research report.

Suspension or Termination

MFAT may at any time suspend or terminate the scholarship if it is satisfied the holder has failed to comply with any of the conditions or agreements relating to the scholarship.

General Advice to Applicants

MFAT will give preference to topics that address issues of current importance to:

- The Government's aims to increase the value of New Zealand's exports and offshore earnings;
- the Government's trade policy initiatives and trade negotiation agenda; and
- Industry.

Applications need to be completed in full and arrive by the closing date in order to be considered. MFAT will not necessarily be able to follow up missing or incomplete information, including any late or missing referee reports.

An important aspect of the scholarship is the applicant's engagement with industry. Applicants are encouraged to seek and provide evidence of (or a plan for) industry support for their research.

Scholarship holders will be encouraged to begin research as early as possible.

University research ethics approval processes may also need consideration in research timeframes.

The selection panel prefers concisely written research plans. Plans exceeding four pages or lengthy supporting documentation, which is time consuming to read, are unlikely to be reviewed by the panel.

Referees should not send their reports to applicants. Referees must have the opportunity to make confidential comments and should send their reports directly to MFAT.

Please send copies (not originals) of documents such as academic qualifications. If a candidate is awarded a scholarship s/he will be asked to provide a second set of copies which have been verified by a J.P., a solicitor, or a member of staff listed on their University registry. MFAT accepts no responsibility for returning any documents.

Application Timeframe

- November-December 2011: Consider topics and talk with industry and university about research ideas
- January 2012: Prepare Scholarship application. Ensure referees have enough time and information to submit their references
- **5pm, Friday 10 February 2012: Application deadline**
- **5pm, Friday 10 February 2012: Referees' report deadline**
- End of February 2012: Successful applicants notified

- March 2012: Scholarship holders to complete Output, Milestone and Payment Documents. Scholarship holders receive first payment and start research.

Administration

Please post, email or fax your application to:

Vicki Plater
Head of Research, Economic Division
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Private Bag 18-901
Wellington
Email: vicki.plater@mfat.govt.nz
Fax: 04 4 439 8545