McLauchlan Thomson Postgraduate Sciences Scholarship

Established in 2026 by the University of Otago with generous support from Stuart McLauchlan, Chair of the University of Otago Foundation Trust, and Dr Jessica Thomson, his stepdaughter. The purpose of this award is to provide financial support to postgraduate Sciences students with a good academic record who face genuine financial hardship and have no other scholarship funding. It is targeted primarily at PhD students, but Master of Science (Thesis) students meeting the criteria may also apply.

Eligibility

Applicants must be (or have):

- a New Zealand citizen or New Zealand Residence Class Visa Holder
- enrolled in (or accepted for admission to) a PhD or Master of Science (Thesis) degree featuring scientific or science-related research, with a primary supervisor from a Department or School in the Division of Sciences
- a good academic record, with a GPA of at least B (or equivalent) in their qualifying degree, and
- faced with genuine financial hardship.

The aim of this scholarship is to provide financial support to postgraduate students in difficult financial circumstances who have not been granted any other scholarship or award. Students in receipt of another scholarship for the same period of study, or likely to be granted one, will not be eligible for this award.

A PhD student previously granted this scholarship may apply for it a second time, provided they have received a Satisfactory Progress report for the period of their first tenure of the scholarship. Master of Science (Thesis) students may only be awarded the scholarship once.

Application Process

Every application for the scholarship must be submitted to Student Administration (Scholarships) at the University of Otago by the specified closing date.

Every applicant must submit:

- a completed application form
- an up-to-date CV (curriculum vitae)
- a short personal statement (300-500 words) outlining:
  - their PhD or thesis Master's programme and planned course of study
  - any related career plans or aspirations
  - their overall financial position, including any specific hardship faced
- a declaration that they will not accept funding from any other tertiary scholarship or award (excluding prizes) during their tenure of this scholarship
- a reference letter from a researcher or teacher familiar with their academic credentials, and
- an academic transcript for prior study undertaken at any other tertiary institution.

Selection Process

The Selection Panel will consist of the following (or their nominees): the Associate Dean (Postgraduate) for Sciences; one senior academic appointed by the Associate Dean (Postgraduate); the Director, Development and Alumni Relations; and the Manager, Postgraduate Scholarships, Prizes and Awards.

The following factors shall be considered in selecting the successful applicant:

- academic merit, with a GPA of at least B in the applicant's qualifying degree expected
- the nature and degree of financial hardship faced by the applicant.

If a PhD applicant has already held the scholarship once, the Selection Panel shall also satisfy itself that the applicant has received a Satisfactory Progress report for the period of their first tenure of the award.

The Selection Panel may require an interview with short-listed applicants for the scholarship.

Financial

- The total value of the scholarship (per recipient) is $10,000 for one year of full-time study towards a qualifying PhD or Master of Science (Thesis) degree, or part-time equivalent.
- The scholarship funds will be applied first towards a rebate of the recipient's tuition fees, with any amount left over paid to the recipient in a single lump sum to assist with living costs.
- There will normally be only one scholarship awarded annually.
- Any variation to the number and value of scholarships available each year will be a matter for determination by the Selection Panel.

Tenure

- Tenure of this scholarship will normally be one year of full-time study or part-time equivalent.
- The scholarship may be awarded (on application) to the same PhD student for a second time, provided they are deemed to have made satisfactory academic progress during their previous tenure of the award. Master of Science (Thesis) students may only receive the scholarship once.
- The scholarship must be taken up within one year of being awarded.
- The scholarship may not be held concurrently with any other tertiary scholarship.

Other Requirements

- Award of the scholarship is dependent on the recipient being admitted to the University of Otago.
- Scholarship recipients must submit a brief progress report at the end of their year of tenure, to be forwarded to the Donor via the Stewardship Officer, DARO.
- Any final or published research output (e.g. thesis, journal or conference papers) will be made available to the Donor as soon as practicable, where commercial and intellectual property rights so allow.
- The University of Otago reserves the right to use the names, photographs, and details of successful applicants for advertising and publicity. Award holders must agree to be reasonably available to participate in interviews and promotional activities if requested by the University.