



Call for Scholarship applications

3-year Doctoral Scholarship

Funded by the Earthquake Commission
Hosted by the Centre for Sustainability, University of Otago
Dunedin, New Zealand

Understanding and implementing earthquake-related legislation in lower seismic hazard zones

We are seeking an **applied, interdisciplinary research candidate** with exceptional communication skills to join our dynamic research team at the University of Otago. Prior research, policy or planning experience will be advantageous.

New Zealand is high risk for earthquakes and other natural hazards as a consequence of its physical location across an active plate boundary. However, seismic risk is not uniform across the country, and some of our communities are much higher risk than others. However, low risk does not equal no risk.

This three-year project will focus on investigating the uptake and implementation of public policies related to seismic resilience in lower seismic hazard zones in southern New Zealand. The Earthquake Prone Building Act is a key policy designed to address seismically unsafe buildings, however the perception and application of this legislation amongst policy-makers and private sector stakeholders varies across the nation. This research will pave the way to an improved understanding of the barriers and challenges of implementing earthquake-related legislation in lower seismic hazard zones.

The successful candidate will work closely with local government and private sector stakeholders, and use qualitative research methods to ascertain their level of understanding of risk-based legislation, the barriers to implementing the legislation, and assess progress

towards achieving the government's target for improving the building stock across the country.

The successful candidate will be funded by the Earthquake Commission for three years (2020-2023), and be part of an interdisciplinary programme with the Department of Geology, which is undertaking a significant seismic hazard assessment of southern NZ as part of this research project. We will have regular meetings with the full team throughout the project.

Inter-disciplinary skills are encouraged, including: planning, geography, law, social science, or sociology. Equivalent work experience in a related field will be highly regarded.

Due to Covid-related restrictions, the student must be currently based in New Zealand.

The successful candidate will be based at the University of Otago, and will have supervisory support from Dr Caroline Orchiston. They will join a supportive, engaged and dynamic interdisciplinary team of hazards scientists and practitioners, including doctoral students working in related fields.

It is anticipated that this research will begin as soon as an appropriate candidate has been identified.

Value and tenure

- If successful, the RNC scholarship includes a \$27,000 stipend (tax free) plus a tuition fee waiver of up to NZ\$8,800 per annum for three years (i.e. EQC will pay your fees).
- This project will span 2020-2023 (inclusive). Covid may delay the start date, which will be accommodated if required.
- The recipient will be supervised by Dr. Caroline Orchiston at the Centre for Sustainability, University of Otago (Dunedin, New Zealand), and co-supervised by other appropriate individuals once the topic has been confirmed.
- The Centre for Sustainability has a reputation for providing excellent pastoral care and support for their graduate students. Visit <http://www.otago.ac.nz/centre-sustainability/index.html>

Applicant eligibility

This PhD scholarship is open only to domestic candidates. For all applicants, please note you will need to have an excellent GPA and English writing and communication skills to apply.

It is a prerequisite that applicants have a Masters qualification in a relevant discipline with a *research thesis* component which totals ~30% of their overall Masters grade.

How to apply

Applicants should submit an email to Dr. Caroline Orchiston that includes:

- A full curriculum vitae;
- Academic transcript;
- Contact details and supporting letters from two suitably qualified referees;

- An example of your best written work (e.g. a chapter of Masters thesis, industry report, or a published journal article);
- One A4 page cover letter outlining your interest in the topic, and why you would like to be considered for this scholarship.

The closing date for applications is September 30th 2020. Short-listed applicants will be invited to an interview either in person or online to discuss their application.

Please email your application to Dr. Caroline Orchiston (caroline.orchiston@otago.ac.nz). Contact Dr. Orchiston via email or phone (+64 21 0778888) with any questions or queries about the research.