McLauchlan Thomson Overseas Research Scholarship

Established in 2026 by the University of Otago and generously sponsored by Stuart McLauchlan, Chair of the University of Otago Foundation Trust, and Dr Jessica Thomson, his stepdaughter. The purpose of this scholarship is to provide financial support to Sciences PhD students conducting research at an overseas laboratory as part of their doctoral programme. The scholarship is open to PhD candidates in genuine financial need who have no alternative scholarship funding.

Eligibility

Applicants must be (or have):

- a New Zealand citizen or New Zealand Residence Class Visa Holder
- enrolled in a PhD programme featuring scientific or science-related research, with a primary supervisor from a Department or School in the Division of Sciences
- confirmed arrangements to undertake a period of research at an overseas laboratory or scientific research facility as part of their doctoral studies
- 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 award is to offer financial support to PhD students in difficult financial circumstances who have not been granted any other scholarship or award. Students in receipt of a different scholarship for the same period of research, or likely to be granted one, will not be eligible for this award.

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:
  - the applicant's PhD programme and planned course of study
  - where they have been invited to conduct their overseas research
  - the nature of the research they intend to undertake overseas, and how it contributes to their overall PhD study programme
  - any related career plans or aspirations
  - their overall financial position, including any particular financial hardship faced
- a declaration that the applicant will not receive funding from any other tertiary scholarship or award (excluding prizes) during their tenure of this scholarship
- a letter from the overseas institution hosting the applicant confirming the start and finish dates and agreed research goals proposed for the applicant's visit
- an academic reference letter from the applicant's (principal) PhD supervisor, 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
- how the overseas research will enhance or complement the applicant's PhD programme, plus any other advantages expected to accrue to either the applicant or the University of Otago
- the nature and degree of financial hardship faced by the applicant.

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, intended to help meet reasonable costs associated with conducting research at an overseas laboratory or research facility, such as travel, accommodation and research-related costs, and living expenses.
- The scholarship will normally be paid to the recipient in two instalments: 80% upon award of the scholarship, to help defray up-front expenses, and the balance at the start of the recipient's approved overseas research leave.
- There will normally be only one overseas research 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

- The scholarship may be held with full-time or part-time tenure.
- 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.
- Following their research overseas, recipients should prepare a brief report summarising their experience and findings, addressed to the Donors, sent via the Stewardship Officer, DARO.
- Any final or published research output (e.g. thesis, journal or conference papers) building on the recipient's overseas research should also be made available to the Donor, 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.