

Geddes Postgraduate Awards in Social Anthropology

Established in 2025 by the University of Otago through a generous bequest from the estate of Ngaere Adele Geddes (1928-2020), given in honour of her late husband, Professor W R Geddes (1916-1989).

A distinguished alumnus of the University of Otago (BA 1938, MA 1939), Professor Geddes received a PhD from the University of London in 1948. As well as studying there, Geddes also lectured briefly in psychology at the University of London, before returning to New Zealand and teaching at Auckland University College for several years during the 1950s. Geddes subsequently moved to Australia, taking up a chair in social anthropology at the University of Sydney in 1959, and in 1963 he married Ngaere Adele Te Punga. Geddes enjoyed an active academic career until his retirement in 1981, including several stints of fieldwork in Southeast Asia, and post-retirement he continued to travel and work tirelessly for the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. He died in 1989 at Wahroonga, NSW. Geddes viewed anthropology as a significant force for cross-cultural understanding, tolerance and action, and strongly believed anthropologists should play a practical role in affairs in their particular areas of expertise.

In tribute to Professor W R Geddes, these awards seek to support postgraduate students of merit to pursue courses in Social Anthropology at the University of Otago. The awards will be available via two pathways: one for meritorious postgraduate Social Anthropology students of Māori, Pacific or other Indigenous ancestry, and one for meritorious postgraduate Social Anthropology students of non-Indigenous ancestry.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this award, applicants must be:

- enrolled or planning to enrol in 400-level study towards a postgraduate programme (i.e. Honours, Postgraduate Diploma, or Master's degree with a coursework/paper component) taught within the Social Anthropology Programme.
- able to provide [ancestry verification](#) from the University if of Māori or indigenous Pacific descent.

Students enrolling in 400-level Social Anthropology papers under a Certificate of Proficiency, with a view to crediting the papers towards an Honours degree, may also be eligible for this award.

Application Process

Every application for the award 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 curriculum vitae
- a brief written statement outlining their leadership activities or other social or community engagement
- a brief written statement discussing the viability of their research proposal as a social anthropological project (if undertaking an Honours dissertation)
- a copy of their academic transcript if any previous study was undertaken at another tertiary institution.

Selection Process

The selection panel for this award includes the Associate Dean Postgraduate for the Division of Humanities, the Head of Programme for Social Anthropology, the Director, Development and Alumni Relations, and the Manager, Postgraduate Scholarships, Prizes and Awards (or their nominees).

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

- the applicant's academic performance throughout their undergraduate study
- evidence of the applicant's engagement with and/or leadership within their community
- where the applicant will be undertaking a dissertation, the viability of the research proposal for their dissertation as a social anthropological project.

The selection panel may require an interview with short-listed applicants for this award.

Financial

- The total value of the award (per recipient) is \$20,000.
- The award funds will be paid out in two equal instalments, at the start of each academic semester.
- The number of awards available each year will be determined by the selection panel.

Tenure

- The award may be held with full-time or part-time tenure.
- The award must be taken up within one year of being awarded.
- The award may be held concurrently with any other University of Otago award where its regulations also allow co-tenure.

Other Requirements

- The granting of this award is dependent on the recipient being admitted to the University of Otago.
- The University of Otago reserves the right to use the names, photographs, and details of successful applicants for advertising and publicity. The award holders must agree to be reasonably available to participate in interviews and promotional activities if requested by the University of Otago.