

Marsden PhD Scholarship in Statistics

Closing date: 1 February 2019

A Marsden funded PhD Scholarship in Statistics including all tuition fees and a tax-free stipend is available at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) in Auckland, New Zealand starting in April 2019 or as soon as possible afterwards for a period of three years.

BACKGROUND

The successful applicant will work on a cross-Faculty project dealing with identifying inflammation biomarkers for depression in Pacific youth in New Zealand (NZ). The project is led by Professor Richard Siegert (Department of Psychology, Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences) and Dr El-Shadan Tautolo (Director of the Centre for Pacific Health & Development Research) and includes researchers from the AUT Roche Diagnostics Laboratory and AUT's School of Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences. International collaboration with researchers at Deakin University in Australia and Nottingham Trent University in the UK is also involved.

Pacific youth in NZ have a higher rate of depression than the general population. There is evidence that depression and inflammation occur together but little understanding of how they impact on each other. The aim of this research project is to assess depression and inflammation markers in the blood of 875 Pacific youth aged 20 who have been participants in AUT's longitudinal Pacific Islands Families Study (PIFS) since birth.

The successful PhD applicant will apply modern analytics and biostatistics to identify depression subtypes and relationships among demographic, epidemiological, psychosocial and blood-assayed risk features of depression. These analyses will involve the use of both traditional statistical techniques and machine-learning algorithms.

This position provides a unique opportunity for a student with a Masters or Honours qualification in analytics or statistics to gain valuable experience in healthcare analytics and biostatistics as well as to work with an international team and contribute to a highly important health issue in New Zealand and internationally.

For informal enquiries, contact Professor Ajit Narayanan (Ajit.Narayanan@aut.ac.nz)

VALUE AND TENURE

- The annual value of the scholarship is NZ \$27,500 for up to three years plus PhD fees over this period (subject to satisfactory progress). Stipend payments are considered income but are exempt from tax at source.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Applicants must have completed a Masters or Honours qualification in analytics or statistics, with first class Honours or equivalent.
- The successful candidate will demonstrate enthusiasm and have an outstanding academic record and be prepared to conduct the doctoral study at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) based in Auckland, New Zealand.
- Applying for a scholarship and admission into AUT are separate processes at AUT. Applicants must fulfil all conditions for admission to the Doctoral Programme in AUT. These can be found on the AUT University website www.aut.ac.nz.
- Requirements for the Doctoral programme include having completed the required academic qualifications for direct entry and meeting the requirements for English language proficiency. Minimum English language requirement for international applicants – IELTS scores of 6.5 overall with 7 in writing and all other bands 6.0 or higher. A high proficiency in English is essential.

Note: The award of this scholarship is conditional on acceptance into the AUT doctoral programme. International applicants should contact phdadmissions@aut.ac.nz for advice regarding the admissions process for international students.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants must apply through the AUT Scholarship application portal and upload:

- A curriculum vitae (2 pages maximum).
- A brief outline (2 pages maximum) describing your research skills and experience
- A summary (1 page only) of your motivations for and goals in undertaking a PhD.
- Academic transcripts and certificates for any previous tertiary study completed at a university other than AUT.
- Two academic referee statements requested by the applicant from the on-line application system. Applicants must not submit referee's reports directly. Nominated referees will be sent a request directly from the system.

CLOSING DATE: Applications will close on Friday, 1st February 2019. If an appropriate candidate is not identified the scholarship may be reopened.

SELECTION PROCESS

- Selection will be based on demonstrated strength in the following:
 - the applicant's academic record
 - past research experience and publication record (if appropriate) relevant to this project
 - the referees' statements
- The Selection panel's decision will be final; if suitable applicants are not available the panel will not award the scholarship. The position may then be re-advertised.

CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE

- The stipend cannot be released until the successful applicant is enrolled in the PhD programme at AUT.
- The start date will depend on the completion of AUT enrolment and obtaining a student visa (if required). The scholarship is to be taken up no later than April 2019 unless otherwise negotiated.
- The successful applicant must be prepared to commit full-time to their programme of research.
- The successful applicant will be required to sign an AUT Research Scholarship Contract.
- This scholarship may not be held in conjunction with any other scholarship without the approval of the selection panel and the Scholarships Office.
- Recipients must be resident in New Zealand to receive stipend payments. Stipends will not be paid to students living off-shore. Reasonable annual holiday leave overseas of no more than four weeks is acceptable.
- Scholarships payments will not be made retrospectively.
- Recipients must notify the School and the Scholarships Office in writing if they wish to apply for a Leave of Absence or withdraw from their programme.