BACKGROUND

This scholarship was established in 2017 by Dr Graham Sparling and his wife Ruth Sparling, in recognition of Dr Sparling’s time at University of Waikato where he enjoyed much interaction with staff and students and held them in high regard.

Dr Sparling was a well-known New Zealand soil scientist and was recognised internationally for his work in soil biology and biochemistry as well as indicators of soil quality and health. After many years with the former NZ Soil Bureau (DSIR), some years at the University of Western Australia, and later with Landcare Research, Dr Sparling decided to follow his personal interests. He was offered a Research Associate position at the then Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences at the University of Waikato. There followed a productive and enjoyable 10 years until he retired fully in 2017.

Graham and Ruth set up this Scholarship to allow students to achieve their ambitions in environmental sciences, with particular emphasis on the science and ecology of soil, and enabling students to achieve their ambitions for their careers as well as the benefit of New Zealand. The Scholarship will support one student per year.

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of the award is to provide financial assistance to students for the completion of a doctoral degree.

2. Eligibility

2.1. To be eligible, candidates must:

a) be enrolled full-time in a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the general area of environmental studies, natural sciences, or agricultural sciences, but not marine or volcanic studies, in any faculty of relevance;

b) normally be seeking to obtain their first doctoral qualification;

c) have completed 3 years of their PhD and be submitting their soft-bound thesis for examination within 4 years;

d) be submitting their soft bound thesis for examination by the end of the year of award; and

e) be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident of New Zealand;

2.2 Applicants employed by the University of Waikato will not normally be eligible to apply for this Scholarship.

3. Value

3.1. The value of the Scholarship will be up to $10,000 for 6 months of study and will be paid in four instalments - $3,000 on winning the award, $2,000 after 2 months, $2,000 after 4 months and the balance of $3,000 on submission of the soft-bound thesis for examination.
4. Application

4.1. The closing date for applications is 31 March annually.

4.2. Along with the prescribed application form, each applicant must submit:
   a) A personal statement (using the prescribed template)
   b) A clear timeline leading up to submission (specifying the planned date of submission)

4.3. Applicants must ask an academic supervisor to complete the prescribed Supervisor Statement of support, which the supervisor must email directly to the School of Graduate Research by the closing date. The supervisor should also be able to provide supporting statements for the Selection Criteria.

5. Selection Criteria

5.1. When assessing applications, the Selection Panel will take into consideration the following:
   • Academic merit;
   • Financial hardship;
   • Empathy to fellow students;
   • Potential as a “future leader”;
   • Contribution to departmental functions (e.g., tutoring, field assistance, etc.) and willingness to contribute “above and beyond”;
   • Competence with laboratory equipment;
   • Evidence of innovation and originality;
   • Good communication skills in both formal and informal settings (e.g., publications, hui, conference presentations etc.);
   • Length of enrolment (preference will be given to students submitting within four years; of (equivalent full time) enrolment;
   • Ability to meet deadlines;
   • History of satisfactory doctoral progress reports; and
   • Other funding received by the applicant.

5.2. All applicants will be advised by email of the outcome of their application.

6. Selection Panel

6.1. The Selection Panel will comprise the Dean of School of Graduate Research (in the Chair), the Scholarships Manager, the Development Manager, and an academic who researches in the area of environmental studies, natural sciences and/or agricultural sciences (or their nominee).

6.2. The Selection Panel may refrain from making a recommendation if it finds no candidate of sufficient merit.

6.3. All candidates will be advised of the outcome of their application.

6.4. The Selection Panel’s decision is final and no further correspondence will be entered into following the Selection Panel’s meeting.
7. **Awarding**

7.1. Successful applicants will be sent a Terms and Conditions document which must be signed and returned by the date stated in the offer documents.

7.1.1. The offer of a Sparling Doctoral Completion Scholarship in Environmental Studies must be accepted within one week of the offer being made. If it is not accepted within this timeframe, the Scholarship offer will lapse and be offered to reserve applicants.

8. **Other Conditions**

8.1. The Scholarships Committee may terminate a Scholarship at any time and recoup funds awarded, if it is not satisfied that the recipient is following the required programme or is not otherwise complying with the conditions governing the Scholarship and/or the regulations of the University of Waikato.

8.2. The holder of a Scholarship shall have the right to appeal to the Research Committee against any decision to terminate the Scholarship.

8.3. By accepting the offer of a Scholarship, the recipient agrees to participate in any publicity concerning the Scholarship arranged by the University of Waikato.

8.4. The University may from time to time vary these regulations.