

University of Waikato Disability Sport and Active Recreation Doctoral Scholarship



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

The University of Waikato Disability Sport and Active Recreation Doctoral Scholarship was established in 2019 by Te Hautaki Waiora Faculty of Health, Sport and Human Performance (FHSHP). The University of Waikato is committed to ensuring opportunities for disabled people to participate in sport and active recreation as part of everyday life, and FHSHP aims to establish a reputation as national leaders in Disability/Para Sport. The Scholarship consists of three connected, though discrete, doctoral projects intended to promote different perspectives in supporting and enhancing sport and active recreation provision for disabled people (see Appendix 1). The project briefs have been determined as part of a collaborative dialogue between The University of Waikato, Halberg Foundation, Paralympics New Zealand, Sport Waikato, Parafed Organisations in New Zealand, and Special Olympics New Zealand. The expectation is that the three successful Scholarship recipients will each undertake one of the discrete projects, whilst working as a member of the broader research programme.

Candidates are expected to extend the understanding of disability sport and active recreation in partnership with the disability sport sector and 'industry' stakeholders. Candidates will be encouraged/supported to disseminate findings in high-quality peer-reviewed publications and international conferences. As part of this initiative, candidates will have opportunities to engage in knowledge translation activities with community partners.

For further information, please contact Dr Robert Townsend (robert.townsend@waikato.ac.nz).



1. Eligibility

- 1.1. Candidates must be able to demonstrate a commitment to, and interest in, one of the three topic areas (see Appendix 1), and disability sport and active recreation in general.
- 1.2. Candidates who have not already submitted an application for doctoral study must complete and submit an application to enrol at the same time that they apply for the Scholarship. See <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/study/apply/higher-research-degrees-application-process> for more details.
 - 1.2.1. The offer of this Scholarship may only be taken up by a candidate who has formally completed the entry qualifications for, and enrolled full-time in, doctoral study at the University of Waikato.
- 1.3. Candidates must have a minimum grade average of A- for their most recent 240 points of study.
- 1.4. The Scholarship is open to New Zealand citizens, permanent residents, and international students.

2. Application

- 2.1. The closing date for applications is **31 March 2019**.
- 2.2. Applications must be submitted on the prescribed online form and include:
 - 2.2.1. A two-page personal statement that briefly presents:
 - The project the applicant is applying for (see Appendix 1)
 - An outline of prior research qualifications, experience and publications
 - A summary of any past or present work/employment of relevance to this Scholarship and project in particular
 - 2.2.2. An accessible link to a three-minute pitch (digital presentation) about why this area of research is relevant/important; and
 - 2.2.3. Verified copies of academic transcripts from any tertiary institutions (other than the University of Waikato) the applicant has attended.
- 2.3. Applicants should seek submission of two academic references, one of which must be from a member of the academic staff at the institution at which they obtained the qualification that defines their eligibility to enter the doctoral programme.

3. Value

- 3.1. The Scholarship offers a stipend of **up to \$22,000** per annum, payable in monthly instalments, and domestic tuition fees¹ for enrolment in the doctoral programme during the tenure of the Scholarship.

¹ It is the student's responsibility to cover any additional costs such as the Student Services Levy, medical insurance, etc.

4. Selection Panel and Criteria

- 4.1. The Selection Panel will comprise the Dean of the Faculty of Health, Sport and Human Performance (as Chair), the Dean of the School of Graduate Research, an academic staff member in a relevant field appointed by the Chair, and a representative from the Disability Sport and Active Recreation Sector nominated by the Chair.
- 4.2. The Scholarship will be awarded primarily on academic merit, with a minimum grade average of A- for the applicant's most recent 240 points of study expected for eligibility. Other factors that will be taken into consideration include the applicant's demonstrated commitment to, and interest in, one of the available projects, and their performance in their digital presentation.
- 4.3. Preference will be given to candidates who have already completed the entry qualifications for doctoral study. The Selection Panel will favour applications from new doctoral students.
- 4.4. The Selection Panel's decisions are final and no correspondence will be entered into following the selection meeting.

5. Awarding

- 5.1. The Scholarship offer must be accepted within two weeks of the formal offer of the Scholarship being made. If the candidate fails to accept the award within this timeframe, the offer will lapse.
- 5.2. A Scholarship may only be taken up by a candidate who has formally completed the entry qualifications for, and enrolled full-time in, doctoral study at the University of Waikato.
- 5.3. The recipient must commence doctoral study within two months of accepting the Scholarship. If the recipient does not start within this timeframe, the Scholarship offer may be withdrawn.

6. Tenure

- 6.1. The full tenure of the Doctoral Scholarship will not exceed three years of full-time doctoral enrolment.
 - 6.1.1. Termination of, or withdrawal from, the full-time programme of doctoral study for which the Scholarship has been awarded shall constitute termination of the Scholarship.
 - 6.1.2. Failure to attain the level of 'meets expectations' or above, on any progress report, without a justifiable reason, shall jeopardise the continuation of the Scholarship payments, until this level is met.
 - 6.1.3. If during the tenure of the Scholarship, a recipient's circumstances change in such a manner that their continued eligibility for the Scholarship may be affected, they must inform the School of Graduate Research immediately.

6.1.4. The Scholarships Executive may terminate a Scholarship at any time, and recoup any funds disbursed, if the holder withdraws from the University of Waikato during the tenure of the Scholarship, brings the Scholarship or the named partners into disrepute², or is otherwise not complying with the regulations governing the Scholarship. The holder will have the right to appeal to the Research Committee against any decision to terminate the award.

7. Other Conditions

- 7.1. The Scholarship may not be held in conjunction with a University of Waikato Doctoral Scholarship. It may be held in conjunction with any other scholarship or award, provided the conditions of the other award do not preclude this.
- 7.2. The recipient will be supervised by a University of Waikato academic staff member from the Faculty of Health, Sport and Human Performance.
- 7.3. The recipient will comply with all reasonable requests and instructions of the University of Waikato, including the confirmation of enrolment and submission of a final doctoral thesis by the dates set by the Postgraduate Research Committee.
- 7.4. In addition to doctoral progress reports, the recipient will provide a report on the progress of their research to partners every six months, as requested and coordinated by their Chief Supervisor.
- 7.5. By accepting the Scholarship, the recipient agrees to participate in any reasonable publicity concerning the Scholarship arranged by the University of Waikato and/or the partners named in these regulations.

² See [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Appendix 1. Project details.

Project One: Structural Inclusion, Equity and Access

Sport and active recreation can and regularly does marginalise disabled bodies (Bundon & Clarke, 2015). The Sport NZ Active NZ Survey (2017) and Disability Active Recreation and Sport Survey (2018) for example, highlighted that disabled people participate less regularly in sport and experience significant barriers to participation. Thomas (2007) refers to this kind of exclusion as a form of disablism. Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), sporting organisations have a responsibility to provide equitable access to participation for disabled people regardless of their impairment(s) (e.g. physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, intellectual or other impairments), yet disabled people's experience of this 'inclusive' mandate is often overlooked. Furthermore, the situation is made more complex where disability sport provision is characterised by multiple competing stakeholders, with different perspectives and policies and practices on inclusion. This project aims to build an evidence base on how sporting structures enact inclusion 'work'. It will investigate the policies and practices that support inclusion in disability sport. It will also explore how disabled people engage with, experience and understand inclusion (and, relatedly, exclusion) in sport and active recreation contexts.

The purpose of this project is to influence policy and practices that will enhance disability sport provision, build NSO capability to support inclusion, and address the current structural compartmentalisation of disability sport as separate from 'mainstream'. The intent is to work towards some 'guiding principles' for inclusion that enhance NSO capability to increase the visibility of disabled people in sport and active recreation. In so doing, the project can contribute to the removal of social and cultural barriers by attending to participants' voices and NSO policies and practices that enable and constrain access to sport and active recreation for disabled communities.

Project Two: Enhancing Coach Learning and Development Systems in Disability Sport

Coaches play a crucial role in supporting disabled peoples' access to and engagement in high-quality sporting experiences. However, there is currently a lack of consensus and direction on coaching in disability sport and the role of the coach is broad and varied, informed by individual, cultural and social factors placing complex demands on the knowledge and skills of coaches. A common barrier to disabled peoples' participation in sport and active recreation is a lack of coaches that understand disability and therefore feel confident to practice 'inclusion'. One crucial feature of high-quality disability sport is the delivery of optimal professional development (e.g. coach education) to support practitioners. However, the current situation is that there is a lack of formal, professional development and education opportunities available to coaches specifically in the disability context. Commonly, disability 'coach education' reflects a 'segregated' model of professional learning, comprising isolated, one-off seminars and workshops that may focus on either impairment-specific information or broader adaptations or modifications coaches can make to existing practice structures to promote 'inclusion'. Within this model, rather than attempting to extend and transform coach learning, the focus is on the limiting and varied effects of impairment as the cause of restrictions of activity. The current situation then is concerning as coaches are often 'thrown in at the deep end' of disability sport with no training or education to support their learning and practice.

The purpose of this project is to contribute to a world-class system of coach learning in the New Zealand disability sport context that has international relevance. The project itself will involve working closely with Halberg Disability Sport Foundation, Paralympics New Zealand, Sport Waikato, Parafed Organisations in New Zealand, and Special Olympics New Zealand, liaising with coach development practitioners and with coaches and athletes to understand coaching in disability sport. The research will centralize the voices of key stakeholders across disability sport (e.g. athletes, coaches, parents, social workers, carers). As a matter of priority, the insights generated will provide direction for organisations building and implementing formal, on-going professional development systems (and possible resources) for coaches working in the disability sport context.

Project Three: Athlete Welfare in Para sport

Athlete welfare is a particularly 'hot topic' in elite sport (Cronin & Armour, 2018). This is particularly the case in Para sport, where there are a number of concerns about how best to support athlete welfare. While practitioners have a 'duty of care' for athletes, many high-performance sports practitioners are generally untrained as it relates specifically to holistic notions of athlete welfare. In able-bodied sport, 'models of care' describe the practices and systems that support athlete welfare (Ryan, 2016), yet, in the Para sport context little is known about the complex emotional, physical and material concerns that the 'duty of care' entails, alongside the organisational processes that are crucial to disabled athletes' welfare. The varied effects of impairment itself coupled with the highly-demanding arena of Para sport therefore provides an opportunity to extend our understanding of athlete welfare. The project therefore will generate evidence that can support practitioners working in Para sport environments and contribute to the development of high-quality models of care that enhance Para athletes' welfare.

In particular, the voice of Para athletes is often silenced in research on sport, with the focus typically on those with the power and access to control the high-performance arena (cf. Lincoln, 1993). Drawing on the voices of different stakeholders in the Para sport context, the project aims to understand and enhance the provision of the emotional and practical labour that supports Para athletes' needs in high-performance Para sport. The insights generated from this project will be used to educate and support practitioners working in Para sport contexts, and provide some broader guidance on policies, practices and structures required for supporting Para athletes' welfare and continued engagement in high-performance sport.